

Halo: Imperial Contact

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Summary: It's been 30 years since the end of the Great War, and just as things seem to be settling out, the UNSC and her allies are thrust into a new conflict. One between a tyrannical government, and a certain rebellion that may need a hero or two. Images used in cover are not mine, but the final product is.

1. New Start

Author's Notes: This will be my first official story on this site. The other two were just tests to see if I could write and stick to a story. I failed those tests but I will pass this one. On another note, all facts and references in this story will be coming from the main story lines of the respective games/movies with a few tweaks and adjustments here and there. So, without further ado, please enjoy!_

Author's Note 6/9/14: Here's the updated and revamped timeline that I worked on last night_

Timeline

2525: Human-Covenant War begins with the attack and glassing on parts of Harvest, the UNSC's most distant and lightly defended colony.

2526: Harvest is retaken by Admiral Preston Cole using the 1st and 3rd fast-response fleets. The fleet of thirty warships manages to drive back the five Covenant ships; however, it is made apparent how much of an advantage the Covenant has in space naval warfare, seeing how Admiral Cole lost thirteen ships in the battle.

2528: Harvest is abandoned after numerous space and ground skirmishes usually ending in a 1:4 win-loss ratio in favor of the Covenant. At 19:00hrs Harvest is completely glassed, signifying the first loss for a long time to come for the UNSC.

2530: Battle of Sargasso, Admiral Gregory White revolutionizes

space-naval warfare with tactics described as space-guerilla warfare, using asteroids and debris as cover while luring enemy vessels into waiting HORNET nuclear mines.

2534: After suffering more losses and defeats at the hands of various Human fleets, the Covenant begins a full scale invasion campaign on the UNSC's outer colonies, deploying larger capital ships accompanied by greater amounts of corvette, frigate, and cruiser tonnage vessels. Outmanned and outgunned, the UNSC loses nearly 100 worlds to Covenant forces or glassing, eventually retreating behind the most developed of the outer colonies. As the Covenant war-machine continues its brutal march, the UNSC pours more funding into military, and research projects.

2542: Finally, the UNSC's efforts pay off, as reverse engineering into Covenant tech reveals the secrets of warships-sized shield generators, leading to the development of the MK I shield generator. With this new-found edge in battle, UNSC warships are able to hold their own longer in battle, effectively evening out space-naval warfare to a 2:1 ratio, even if it still favors the Covenant side.

2552: 10 years after the UNSC managed to gain footing against the Covenant, and after the human forces thought they smelled victory in the air, a Covenant armada, consisting of nearly 800 ships is detected heading towards the UNSC fortress-world, Reach; Humanity's second Earth in the stars, and the birthplace of the Spartans. After nearly a year of fighting, Reach is deemed as "doomed," and all remaining UNSC forces continue to hold off the Covenant onslaught until they are evacuated. A UNSC ship, "The Pillar of Autumn" chases after a Covenant assault carrier as it jumps into uncharted space.

2552: The events of Alpha Halo transpire.

2552: The last remaining prophet, Regret, and a small Covenant fleet jump into the Sol system. Taken by surprise, the fleet is nearly decimated as the Home fleet engages the beleaguered Covenant fleet. First Battle of Earth takes place. However, even as the remains of Regret's fleet jump away, they now possess dangerous knowledge: Earth's location.

2552: The events of Delta Halo transpire. Covenant erupts into civil war with the Sangheili and their followers on one side, and the Jiralhanae and their supporters on another.

2553: After the second Battle of Earth, with the annihilation of the last of Regret's fleet, the glassing of a part of Africa to stop the flood, and the sound of one last pistol shot to a wounded chieftain's face, the Human-Covenant War is finished.

2554: UEG signs treaty with the Sangheili to help rebuild all that was lost in the war, as well as to provide help in the ongoing Separatist War.

2554: Operation: _Restart_ commences as UNSC and Covenant Separatist ships begin the process of terraforming and rebuilding destroyed and glassed planets lost in the war, starting with the (inner) outer colonies.

2556: Covenant Loyalists surrender after the remains of the UNSC Home fleet, and the Covenant Separatists' fleet Repentant Fury, cornered them to the Jiralhanae home-world, the last home-world of the entire Loyalist faction.

2558: After a long and grueling "discussion" with the Jiralhanae war chieftain, Tartarus II, the humans and both Covenant factions formed the USOA (United Species of the Orion Arm). An official document is made and signed on the CSO-class super carrier _Reclaimer's Light._

2578: 20 years after the Great War, Tensions between the separate races of the USOA continue to _slowly _disappear as each race works together to rebuild each of their respective empires; some, like the Unggoy and the Mgalekgolo actually start to build their own space-faring empires, finding themselves wanting to be less dependent on others for ships and protection. As all of this is taking place, the UNSC proposes for an early-warning system to be created. As such, the Vigilante advanced sensor array is planned and expected to cover the entire Orion Arm by 2582.

2582: The USOA has recovered enough territory to achieve near antebellum status in terms of territory. However, economic and some political instability still threatens the fragile balance holding the alliance together.

However, this internal struggle is the least of the USOA's problems, as the newly implemented VIGILANTE array proved itself effective as a strange ship is detected in sector 251. Not only is the ship armed, but it also bears with it a message:

"**This is Supreme Admiral Wulff Yularen. This Galaxy is hereby placed under the control the Galactic Empire. All resistance shall be met with the iron fist of the Emperor. You have been warned.**"

Even as the USOA supreme council reviews this message, the entire galaxy will be gearing up for another battle of epic proportions. One could swear that they heard distant bells ringing. However, these bells were not ringing for peace. Oh no, these bells were ringing for a new battle, one that would shake the universe to its very core. For the Empire did not stir a frightened kitten, it aroused a great giant. And that giant was ready for war.

**So yeah, first chapter of my updated story. Once again, I'm sorry for the long (more than a year) wait, but here it is. Read, Review, Eat, Sleep, Relieve Yourself, and have a nice day (its night for me). **
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2. Arrival

_**Author's Note 6/9/2014: **__Here's the updated and revamped version of "Arrival"_

On to the storyâ€|

Arrival

* * *

><p>New Noble, Reach

****July 27, 2582, 1400 hours, USOA Military Calendar****

****5 days after First Contact****

****Rising ****up above the grounds of what was previously New Alexandria, New Noble has taken its place as Reach's capital city. Nearly 345 square miles, with its highest point at nearly 8 miles up, this city was the shining jewel of Humanity's newfound place amongst the stars. And right in the center of it, lies the 6 mile high USOA HIGHCOM center Gamma-01. Throughout the entire city, and the rest of the galaxy for that matter, the atmosphere was tense; especially in the very top floor of the tower. Overlooking the entire city was the Council Chamber. In it, 13 representatives, 2 from each species, sat around a large, imported oak table, ovalar in shape with, and waited for the final member to join them. The representatives consisted of two Unggoy, two Kig-Yar, two Yanme'e, two Sangheili, two Mgalekgolo, two humans and one Jiralhanae. One of the two representatives spoke for the people of their species, the other spoke for their military; the lone Jiralhanae spoke for both the military and the people.

As time wore on, one could visibly see the Jiralhanae begin to become aggravated. Just before he could lash out due to his impatience however, the final member of the meeting entered. As the president of the USOA calmly walked to his seat at the head of the table, his customary Spartan V guards took posts both behind him, and near the entrance of the room. Dressed in a black suit with a red tie, Dimitri Sanatos was the first human president of the USOA, elected after much of the political in-fighting had abated, and after Humanity gained a stronger voice in galactic affairs. The previous elected candidates a Sangheili, and curiously, a Mgalekgolo, had been effective leaders, reigning in the leash of control on the chaotic and confused alliance as it continued to develop in its early years. And now, it was President Santos' turn to lead the alliance, however, as he sat on his chair, the Jiralhanae representative practically exploded forth from his chair, clearly not happy with the meeting in general.

"Human! You had better have a good reason for dragging us all here for this meeting!" Tartarus II practically screamed in the president's face.

" Tartarus, if you would please sit down, I would gladly answer your question, along with all of the other questions you all have, " Dimitri, having grown used to Tartarus II's exceptionally loud outbursts, calmly replied.

As Tartarus grudgingly sat down, Dimitri stated his need for calling the abrupt meeting.

"As you all should know, approximately five days ago, the VIGILANTE array detected a ship in sector 251. Not only was it armed to the teeth, but also bore with it a hostile mess-"

" So what! Just send a fleet over to it, blast it to kingdom come and this will all be over!"

This time, before Dimitri could reply to Tartarus, the Sangheili military representative, Saree' Nevuu', growing tired of the

Jiralhanae's unnecessary shouting stood up , " Tartarus, if you will refuse to shut up now, then I will personally silence you with my sword!"

"Just come and try you split-lipped coward!"

"You want to go you hairy flood-fodder!"

"Squid head!"

"Malodorous Lead footed Nimrod!"

"Hinge- wait what? What did you call me?"

As the two continued to argue, everyone in the room thought the same exact thing: old habits die hard.

Finally, tired of the argument, Dimitri said," If you two would please stop, then we could discuss the matter that could decide the fate of our galaxy."

"But seriously, what did he call me?!"

As the two representatives sat down, Dimitri continued," Now, as I was saying, a heavily armed ship not only just appeared in sector 251, it came bearing a message. About five minutes after its arrival, more ships appeared, coming in by the dozens."

The human military representative, Marcus Lones, asked a vital question," How many ships arrived, and were they armed as well?"

"If the array's scans were correct, then over 350 ships arrived. Some were smaller and more lightly armed; others however were equally, and in some cases, even more heavily armed than the first ship."

This certainly drew everyone's attention; even Tartarus stopped glaring at Saree' and began thinking thoughtfully on this new development.

The Unggoy civilian representative spoke up this time." Why are we taking such brass actions? Are we not civilized people?" The Unggoy looked around the room. "Why don't we just send a diplomatic envoy to meet with these individuals?"

"We did," replied Dimitri, and when he did, the collective noise in the room stopped. As the lone statement echoed around the room, all present were in states of shock, attempting to process this tiny piece of information bringing with it major implications. The only sound belaying the passing of time was the lone digital clock being projected in the middle of the table, ticking by the seconds that followed the massed silence.

Finally, Marcus decided to break the silence.

"Do you have any footage of this, audio or visual?"

Dimitri nodded, and he pressed a button on the arm of his chair. A panel opened up in front of him, and he placed a small data crystal in the port. Immediately, a holographic clock was replaced with a video, depicting a task group of thirteen vessels entering

Slipspace.

****Slipspace****

****USAO Ontaro-class cruiser **_**Algol**_**

****July 22, 2566, 0800 hours****

****Outside**** of the cruiser's main bridge, the vast, inky darkness of slipspace passed by; lightyears were traveled in mere moments as the alternate physics of slipspace allowed the warship and its sister ships to move at superluminal speeds. Inside, the crew performed their many tasks given to them as they all anticipated the moment they came out and faced the new arrivals. The Algol, along with the other Ontaro-class cruisers, was assigned to escort the communications ship, Severed Link. While the Link was not equipped to deal with hostile threats, the cruisers were.

Designed at the end of the Great War, the Ontaro was the UNSC's answer to the horrendous disadvantages many UNSC ships had in terms of space-naval combat. Created using a mix of Human and Covenant designs along with Forerunner technologies, the ship was nearly 1600 meters in length and covered in 2 meters of Duranium battle plate, a combination of Titanium-A Nanocomposite armor, and powerful Forerunner alloys. It was powered by 4 hybrid, fusion-plasma reactors and 2 backup plasma generators. It had 2 standard Macs and 1 experimental heavy Hard light particle cannon, all spinally-mounted; 14 Hard light accelerator batteries; 28 dual-heavy 150mm "Hailfire" railguns; 30 plasma pulse cannons; 120 Blitzkrieg missile pods with plasma-coated fusion warheads that delivered nearly 25 kilotons of explosive damage; 50 90mm anti-ship rail guns; and a Forerunner based CIWS. The ship's other armaments included 20 Shiva tactical nuclear warheads; 5 Havoc nuclear warheads; and a MK IV shield generator. It also carried with it 10 Falchion space superiority fighters, 5 Greatsword bombers, 8 Dragonfly transport ships, 3 battalions of marines, a platoon of ODST's, and an armored column of Grizzly II MBT's and other assorted vehicles.

Combining all of that in one ship, then having twelve of those ships together certainly made one deadly task force.

Onboard the lead cruiser Algol, Admiral Henry Dawson sat in his command chair as the bridge continued to buzz with activity.

"Hordan, what's the eta until we drop out of slipspace?"

"Thirty minutes until we drop out sir," replied Hordan as he consulted with the various data displays around his station.

"Good. Ally, what's the status of the rest of the task force?"

"Everyone's reporting in fine sir."

"Excellent, I don't want us coming out of slipspace with half of the fleet malfunctioning."

"That would make an excellent first impression, now wouldn't it Admiral?" joked Jason from the helm.

"Ha ha, very funny; Ace, what's the status of the ship?"

Ace, the ship's fifth generation smart AI, dressed as a WWII pilot complete with aviation goggles and a cap, replied, "All systems are looking fine admiral, although I have detected strange activity originating from the men's restroom on deck 14. Any clue as to why that is?"

Henry sighed, "must be private Gint again, dismiss that from your logs."

As Henry and the rest of the bridge crew continued their duties, time slipped by, until 60 seconds was all that separated them from a new, possibly hostile force.

"Ace, turn on the fleet wide com."

"Yes sir," replied Ace as he connected the Admiral to the rest of the fleet.

"Alright, listen up. In one minute, we will come face to face with a new force. Whether they are friendly, or hostile, we will see, but I want everyone on their toes, or talons, and prepared for anything, am I clear?"

A chorus of voices, a medley of several species, cheered in their own ways as the seconds ticked down.

"All hands, prepare to leave slipspace," announced Hordan.

"Five"

"Four"

"Three"

"Two"

Everyone tensed as slipspace started to recede. Anticipation and uneasiness was evident throughout all 13 ships.

"One!"

As the task force departed from slipspace, and reappeared back in their own dimension, the lives of everyone in this galaxy, and other galaxies in another part of the universe, changed forever.

****17 BBY, Galactic Standard Calendar****

****Imperial Star Destroyer **_**Iron Dominion**_**

****In the main bridge****

****Supreme **Admiral Wullf Yularen** gazed through the viewport as he awaited the arrival of the rest of the fleet. The system's bright blue star illuminated the planets orbiting around it. There were seven "inner" planets, all of them at various intervals from the sun, all of them solid planets that would provide the incoming Imperial

scouting group with a base of operations in this new galaxy. The admiral's seasoned eyes had seen many things, from the hectic Clone Wars from when he served the now defunct Republic, to this new rebellion that had sprung up and resisted the Empire's control.

For nearly two years now, the admiral had seen constant combat with the new fledgling force that used previously never before seen tactics to stand against the Imperial forces that had them outnumbered and outgunned. It forced many in the Imperial lines to improvise and come up with their own plans for engagement in order to survive the various ambushes and hit-and-run attacks the rebels had been known for.

And finally, after two years, Wullf Yularen found a much needed break in action.

"What is the status of the fleet?" he asked a nearby officer.

"Sir, about one-third of the fleet has arrived, and 67 of the ships are combat-ready, the others are still off-loading their men and supplies onto the nearest planet, designated Pelatis VII to begin construction of the mining facility. The rest of the fleet will arrive in one hour due to some minor complications with their hyper drive."

"Alright, report to me as soon as the rest of the fleet arrives. Those transports and cargo haulers are vital in this operation."

The officer replied with a curt "Sir!" as the admiral resumed gazing at the endless void of space. He pondered on a thought that had been nagging at him for a while, ever since they had arrived in the system.

'Are there any advanced civilizations in this galaxy? The message we sent was purely protocol after all, what if there is no life here at all? There certainly was none in the other 4 galaxies.'

His contemplating was cut short however as another of the bridge officers, this one monitoring a video display, suddenly shouted, "Admiral! 13 anomalies have been detected about 10,000,000 kilometers away!"

"What!" Yularen quickly shifted his gaze to one of the view screens as 13 portal-like anomalies suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

"By the Force," was his only reaction as he continued to look at the swirling white portals. Suddenly, 13 ships drifted out of the portals.

As he, along with the other 90 assembled ships gazed at the newcomers, and the "newcomers" gazed back at them, a certain feeling soon spread throughout both fleets.

It was the feeling of dread. Dread that lives may be lost; dread that things would go very bad very soon. And dread that this new development would lead to something worse.

War.

* * *

><p>Alright, that's finished. I've already begun working on revising the next chapter, so you can expect an update fairly soon. As you've all done before: Read, Review, and tell me what you think.

3. Negotiations

**Author's Notes: 7/4/14** After a one week long break to Mexico, and a nice start of summer for me, I bring you the third revised chapter of Halo: Imperial Contact _

So without further ado, on to the storyâ€|

****Negotiations****

* * *

><p>UNSC Space sector 251

****USAO Ontaro-class Cruiser Algol****

****July 22, 2582, 0800 hours****

"**One," **yelled Hordan, as the Algol and the rest of the task force reappeared in their own dimension.

The first thing the crew noticed was the size of the fleet they were facing. Directly in front of their formation were over sixty ships ranging from smaller corvette-sized ships, to three warships in the middle of their formation rivaling the Ontaro's in size.

Hordan was the first to break the silence.

"Those ships in the center look to be about the same size as our own," said Hordan, as the final ship of the task force arrived. Immediately, all of the bridge crew began their various duties once again, continuing on with a professionalism that followed a disciplined crew who had seen combat before.

"Ace, what's the status of our fleet?"

"Sir, all ships are accounted for and fully operational."

"Okay, is the Severed Link transmitting?"

"Yes sir, the ship is transmitting as per orders. At the moment, they are awaiting a reply from the unknowns."

Admiral Dawson continued studying the various screens and panels on his command seat, "Good let's see if these "negotiations" work out as planned." The admiral shifted his focus from the information he was receiving to quickly glance at a close-up of the three central ships. "Mark those three ships as A-1 to A-3, in case things go south, prioritize those three ships; the rest of the ships are to be marked as either Bravo, Charlie, or, Delta in accordance with tonnage. Make sure all MAC's are spun up, not enough that the unknowns may sense it, but enough to bring to bear as quickly as possible."

A chorus of "Sir!" followed his recent commands, and Admiral Dawson allowed himself a brief sense of pride. 'They are as loyal as they come.'

As the small task-force prepped for a first-contact scenario, the communications ship Severed Link awaited a reply to their hails in hopes of achieving peaceful contact.

Hopes that would soon be swept away on the tides of fate.

****Imperial Star Destroyer Iron Dominion****

****Main Bridge****

"**Admiral**, the ships have stopped nearly 900,000 km away from our position," said one of the various clones on the bridge.

"Put a video feed of the ships on the projector," ordered the admiral, as he walked over to the holoprojector.

What he saw filled him with dread, and wonder. The ships were unlike anything he had ever seen. The ships were blocky and angular, yet, they had a mysterious type of elegance to them. The bows of the ships were split into a type of tuning-fork shape with the prongs facing forward. The prongs came to a point, the upper one jutting out farther than the lower one, which was wider and thicker and appeared to have various antennae and sticking out at odd intervals and varying lengths. Both prongs had one large muzzle each, coming out of shallow alcoves underneath and behind the points. The prong design composed nearly half of the ship; the back half was wider than the front, with four forward-swept wings surrounding a center wing on each side. Behind that section was the engine block, which featured two, large, trapezoid shaped thrusters and six smaller, circular shaped thrusters. The top edges of the sides of the ships reached up for ten meters or so, forming a kind of edge on each side that slightly pointed inward. Nestled in the middle of all of that appeared to be an armored command bridge, with secondary structures running along the length of the top of the ship.

All in all, Admiral Yularen was surprised; pleasantly due to the new ship design offering him a glance at alien architecture, and worriedly due to having no experience or knowledge on these vessels.

'These ships could be capable of decimating our entire fleet, and we wouldn't even be able to tell until they fire, if they happen to deem us hostile that isâ€|' the admiral's attention then shifted to the lone vessel in the center of the formation. 'Then there's that one ship. What could it be capable of?'

"What information have our sensors gathered from the ships?"

"Just a minute. Alright, the ships are nearly 1600 standard meters in length, have various weapon ports housing missiles andâ€|slug throwers?" the officer, along with the everyone on the bridge stared dumbfounded at his displays as he continued on, "and appear to be running on multiple plasma generators of a sort."

The admiral was surprised, "Slug throwers and plasma? They must be more primitive than they look."

"Admiral, we are receiving a transmission from the unknown ship in the middle of the formation," reported another clone.

This came as another surprise for the admiral, "We're able to pick up their transmissions?"

"It appears so sir."

"Hmm, put the transmission on."

As the admiral turned back to the holoprojector, he quickly smoothed out the nonexistent creases in his uniform, and took a calm yet firm pose in front of the vidscreen. However, as the officer connected the transmission to the ship, he received yet, ****another**** surprise, as the person staring at him through the projector, was definitely, without a doubt, human. He could also tell, by the look of the person on screen, that he too was surprised; it would take a fool to not be able to tell why.

The man on the screen quickly regained his posture, "Greetings, I am Captain Moshino Tanaka of the United Species of the Orion Arm communications ship Severed Link. To whom am I speaking?"

"This is Admiral Wulff Yularen of the Imperial Navy. If I may ask, what is your business here?"

"Well, approximately 5 days ago, you transmitted a system wide message that was intercepted by our sensor array. I am speaking on the behalf of my superiors as to why you intend on taking this system as your own." Replied the captain.

"My fleet was sent here as an escort for a mining expedition in this territory. You see, this galaxy is rich with resources that are needed for a conflict that is not of your concern. We were to establish a 'beachhead' of sorts to start the operation." The admiral answered with an air of authority.

"Can we not come to a mutual agreement and coexist with one another? Surely there is another solution to this instead of you simply taking this sector, and possibly the galaxy, as your own?" The captain asked.

The admiral seemed to think it over, rolling the idea around in his head.

"I'm sorry, but even if we could come to a separate agreement, my superiors would see you as a threat to our operations in this system. So, I would like to ask you to please surrender your ships to us, then we shall see to it that you and your 'United Species of the Orion Arm' be assimilated to the Galactic Empire."

The captain could feel anger boiling in himself, and his crew, as the admiral carelessly tossed away the matter as if it meant nothing at all.

"Now hold it right there. If you think that you're just going to come on in here, as a complete stranger, and tell us that you're now our leaders just like that, then you've got another thing coming."

The admiral narrowed his eyes, "Are you saying, that you are going to openly oppose the Galactic Empire?"

"If you don't leave this galaxy, then yes, we are going to oppose your empire."

"You have no idea about the consequences you will receive should you choose to resist. I represent the Galaxy's largest and most powerful government; any and all resistance will be crushed, by the will of the Emperor himself." The admiral said in a dark, forbidding tone.

"We'll take our chances." Said the captain as he terminated the link.

Immediately, the admiral ordered, "Send a fleet-wide message, tell all ships to prepare for combat. Adjust our course to run parallel with the enemy's. Make sure all turbolasers are warmed up and prepare our fighter squadrons."

"Sir yes sir."

"Send word to Captain Valhoss, he and his group are to finish unloading all supplies and equipment immediately and reinforce us." A quick "It shall be done sir," reached the admiral as he sat on his command seat and brought the tactical battle-readout screens to life.

As the fleet prepared for their first skirmish with the USOA, the ships on the opposite end of the sector prepared for the very same conflict.

****USAO Ontaro-class cruiser****

****Command Bridge****

*****Admiral****, we have just received a message from the Link, 'all ships are to prepare for combat, negotiations gone awry.'

Admiral Dawson merely sighed, 'I knew this would happen.'

"Alright have all ships remove safeties from their weapons systems and to fully charge up their MAC's. Have our Falchions and Greatswords prepare for combat.'

"Aye sir."

"Hordan, pull up a tactical interface of the battle on the holoscreen."

"Sending the data over now sir."

The admiral walked over to the projector and soon, a tactical map of the sector was on with the screen zoomed in to show their current positions. The display showed his thirteen ships marked as green arrows on one side, and 63 red arrows representing the enemy fleet on the other.

"Ally when is battle group Crusade due to arrive?" Asked the admiral.

"They are due to arrive in about 30 minute's sir."

"At our current speed, how long will it take to reach optimum firing range for our MAC's?"

"About five minutes sir. Our Blitzkrieg missile pods are capable of lock-on now however."

Dawson just waved off the idea, "At this range, any and all missiles would no doubt be destroyed by their CIWS systems, its best to keep those in secret for now."

"Should we warm up the Hardlight Accelerator sir?"

The admiral studied the screen for a bit. "No, the enemy has us outnumbered nearly six to one, we need to use the element of surprise to our advantage. They don't know our total combat capabilities yet, so lets keep it that way until the right time."

"So we'll just have to hold them off for 30 minutes until backup arrives. Till then, were doin' it the old-fashioned way aren't we admiral?" questioned Joker with his eyebrow cocked and a shit-eating grin his face.

"The admiral returned with his own grin, "just like old times; MAC's a'blazing and lasers and explosions everywhere! But this time, we're the ones handing the enemies they're sorry asses!" The bridge, along with the crews of all the ships cheered in anticipation as the two forces made their way to each other.

However, the admiral knew that in those thirty minutes, the most intense battle of his life could occur. They had fewer ships, and the enemy fleet had ships that matched his own in size. But the fate of the galaxy hung in the balance, and he would not fail; and if he did, he would not go down without a fight.

As both fleets scrambled to prepare for the oncoming battle, Admiral Dawson stared out of the main view port in the bridge.

'Alright Admiral Yularen, let's see what you're made of.'

* * *

><p>Read, review, and tell me what you think.

4. First Strike

**Author's Notes: 7/5/14: An update in less than two daysâ€|WHAAAAAAT! Anyway, this is probably the only fast update I'll ever do, just to throw you guys offâ€|anyway, reviews!**

_**Achronus- **__Holy Hell! That was one of the longest reviews I've seen on this site. Butâ€|It's also one of the most helpful. I'd had the concept of MAC=One-Hit-Kill, and that SW ships had to get so close to their enemies that they were basically "kissing" in order to effectively blast their opponent to all nine Corelian Hells and back. But I never understood the concept of how the turbolasers worked (I

just thought that they fired superheated matter or something that was then kept in an ECM containment field that hurtled towards the enemyâ€|oh well) But I have already thought of ways to give the Imperials a boost in terms of firing range, so just sit tight and watch the show. :)_

_**Blorg13- **__here's more_

_**Guest- **__your lack of an account to properly comment on is agonizingly annoying_

_**Guest- **__I give you__** MOAR!**_

So without further ado, on to the storyâ€|

****First Strike****

****2 BBY, Galactic Standard Calendar****

****Galaxy S-217 Sector SA-03****

****Imperial Star Destroyer Iron Dominion****

****Starboard Hanger Bay 3****

****Second ****lieutenant Tuscard Yoseff glanced around him, using his visor to hide his eyes' movements as he surveyed his opponents around him. They looked as impassive as he thought he looked even with so much on the stakes. He glanced down at his hands, making sure they were carefully concealed. His right held his greatest weapon, while his left held the perfect complimentâ€| An ace and a queen respectively. Ha had put one hundred fifty seven credits on this, a hundred fifty seven, and he sure as hell wasn't going to lose that!

He glanced around one last time, before forcefully slamming down his hands on the table, shocking those around him and revealing his play.

"What the kriff, that's bantha shit!" Senior airman Reynold Prokalov carelessly threw his cards in the air and left to find his fighter among the hive of activity in the crowded hangar bay.

"Yup, that figures," Andy Lowes sighed in defeat as he too got up and left, soon joined by most of the remainder of Raptor squad, all moving to their separate TIE space superiority fighters. The current models, the TIE III "Predator", were the latest in Imperial dog-fighting technology. Superior to the older TIE "Interceptor", the newer models featured slanted wing panels which could adjust angles to increase mobility and had more powerful laser systems attached to the classic "eyeball" shaped cockpit. Originally, during its initial design phase, it was proposed to add a hyper drive to the fighter, but the idea was tossed out the literal window. "Why the hell anyone would put an FTL drive on a fighter is beyond me, I'm sure as hell not strapping that kind of engine to this tin can!"

As the engineers in charge of the bay ran around prepping the various craft in the small amount of time it would take to green light the launching of the Imperial strike craft, a voice blared out of the speakers inside of the bay and around the ship.

"_Attention all crew, report to battle stations immediately. All pilots are to report to your vehicles for pre-flight checks, prepare to engage. I repeat all crew, report to-"_

As the officer on the intercom began repeating the message, Tuscard began making his way to his own TIE. As he approached his docking rack, he smiled as he viewed his fighter easily distinguished by the trademark tooth-filled predatory mouth paintjob present on all the fighters of raptor squad. As he was lifted into the cockpit by via hydraulic lift, the glass panes and metal frame retracted, allowing him to enter the ball-shaped cockpit.

The panes and metal slid back into place, and the small yet comfortable space was cast into darkness, the only light coming from the outside through the glass illuminating the controls in front of him, namely, a small blinking red button on his right panel.

'Show-time,' thought Tuscard as he pressed the button, and soon the entire cockpit was lit with lights from various panels and view screens, give him a full 360 degree view of his surroundings through cameras mounted on the outside of his fighter. The rumble of his fighter told him that the engines were running, as the sensation of gravity soon left him.

With the grav-clamps now off, Tuscard maneuvered his fighter to the entrance of the bay. The energy field keeping the oxygen inside deactivated as the bay depressurized to make sure nothing went flying out when the field dispersed.

Soon, all eight fighters of raptor squad were in formation and were awaiting the go ahead to take off. "_Attention all pilots, this is flight control tower, you are good to launch. Show those slug-throwing' kriffs what the Empire's finest flyers are made of!"_

"This is raptor lead, taking off!"

The eight fighters rocketed out of the now open bay doors, taking up a standard "V" formation with his second in command directly behind his own fighter. The squad soon joined the other hundreds of fighters creating a screen to meet the incoming enemies' own fighters.

Tuscard looked around, seeing the Empire's proud flying force, and felt great pride in not only serving with these brave and bright men, but being able to lead his own squad to combat the unknowns taking a stand against the grand Empire.

"_All wings this is Admiral Wulff Yularen of the Iron Dominion, You are to make sure that no enemy craft are able to come close and engage our own ships. We are fighting against unknowns who use slug throwers and plasma, but don't become overconfident. This enemy still has unknown capabilities that we are unaware of. Take care, and remember, this is our first battle against these forces, so let's give them a fight they will never forget! For the Emperor!"_

"You heard the admiral, all wings charge!"

The 216 fighters launched from the three Imperial-I star destroyers fired their boosters as they quickly approached their opponents own 120 counterparts as they too engaged their thrusters to meet the Imperials.

****UNSC Space Sector 251****

****Falchion Space Superiority Fighter****

****Bravo 2-2 "Brace"****

****July 22, 2582, USOA Military Calendar****

"_**Remember**_all fighter squadrons, you are to engage and hold off the enemy fighter screen at the designated "miracle mile."_ According to our calculations, that is where we will meet the 'Imperial' fleet. Your job is to survive, and eliminate all fighters if possible to clear up the skies and then provide support against the ships marked as 'Delta.' Do not engage targets A-1 to A-3. I repeat, do not engage targets A-1 to A-3, happy hunting boys."_

"You heard the admiral, our job is to engage and neutralize the enemy fighter force; all surviving planes are to then engage the smaller corvette tonnage ships." A chorus of "Sir" and "Hoorah!" followed the order and first lieutenant Brian Duffy refocused on keeping his fighter's nose pointed straight into the enemy formation.

His YSS-1001 "Falchion" space superiority fighter was the culmination of the Sabre project. The successor to the experimental YSS-1000 "Sabre" fighter, featuring a more stream-lined profile and more powerful engines, the Falchion also had new Anvil IV missile pods placed on the underside of each wing, along with 8AFM missiles mounted on the forward-swept wing tips. On either side of the fuselage of the fighter were two twin-mounted GAU-10 rotary cannons, capable of delivering 135mm rounds at a blistering 5,200 rounds per minute, enough to shred though a Mastodon heavy mobile command center in seconds.

As he and the rest of Bravo squadron sped towards the enemy fighters, he happened to glance at an object out of the corner of his eye. Completely out of place in the advanced cockpit of his fighter, hung an old 20th century bullet from a secondary panel. It was an old rim-fire type, and on its side was engraved "Bite the Bullet." A keepsake from the old WWII, back during the Earth-age, before practical space flight was created. It was the last round in his great-great-great-great-great-grandfather's old M1911 service pistol, and he had cherished it and handed it down to signify the historic event that would change humanity's future.

Now, as Brian studied it, he realized that he had not given it to his own son yet; he had yet to tell of the history of the bullet, and what it meant to his ancestor. 'After this, I'm giving it to him,' he glanced around at the formation of Falchions around him, 'I'm gonna make it and give it to him.'

Soon, the two fighter screens approached the 100,000 mark, and his tac-screen began chirping even more, signifying that they were at optimum range to fire the 8AFM's (type 8 anti-fighter missiles). He flipped the switch closest to his right arm, and with that, a small layer of Duranium-F light armored plating slid over the exposed

reinforced Plexiglass of his cockpit. Soon after, a view-screen activated in the place of the glass, showing the world outside with a new HUD layout. The external cameras and sensors linked with his helmet to provide a 360 degree view of the battlefield.

Brian refocused onto the enemy force specifically the two fighters his missiles locked on to. They were bat-shaped, and had an eyeball like cockpit in the middle. The beeping in his ear soon turned into a solid line of noise and he, along with the rest of the pilots in the fighter screen depressed the lower triggers of their controls, sending over 240 missiles straight into the enemy forces. For the Imperials' part, they did do their best to avoid the incoming missiles, throwing themselves out of formation and performing incredible maneuvers. As they watched, they USOA forces observed how the wings shifted and angled themselves, much like the wings of the old "Super Tomcat" of the United States.

However, the missiles launched were highly maneuverable as well and most easily re-shifted their trajectories to compensate for their targets movements. However, as the missiles impacted, a type of shield lit up along the small crafts bodies, seemingly emanating from the wings of the fighters. Even so, the sheer kinetic energy of the missiles severely weakened the shields, and the explosive force was enough to send the fighters in disarray and throw the survivors off course; the not so lucky ones were sheared in half and promptly exploded.

Out of the 216 Imperial fighters, 47 were destroyed in the volley of missiles; the rest were in disarray and were scrambling to get back into formation. It was perfect.

"Let's show these Imperial bastards just what were made of!"

A wave of "Hoorah!" passed through the formation and as one, both sides closed the 50,000 mark.

The USOA fighters began prepping their anvil pods, and their cannons began spinning up. On the opposite end, the Imperials had regained formation and began warming up their own laser and blaster mounts. As the 10,000 mark was crossed, the Falchions fired another volley of 8AFM' and supplemented them with rockets fired from their anvil pods. While the 8AFM's were still locked on, the anvils had fired without achieving lock on status; however, as the rockets neared their targets, the automatic guidance systems onboard immediately homed in on the closest imperial fighters to them.

This strategy however, made it so that some fighters had multiple missiles locked on to them, while others had few based on their unfortunate positions to the inbound missiles. The Imperials once again threw their crafts into more extreme maneuvers, allowing more of the missiles to miss. However, the sheer volume of missiles launched still made it so that many fighters still took at least one hit from an incoming missile. The total Imperial fighter compliment now numbered near the 130's in number, easy odds for the Falchions to deal with. As the fighters finally came close enough to fire their main armaments, the crews on the cruisers of the USOA task force were busy preparing for their own fight ahead.

****USOA Ontaro-class cruiser **_**Algol**_**

****Main Bridge****

"_**Our**_Falchion wings have just engaged the Imperials in close range combat sir," reported Ally as she and the othersensory officers aboard the ship read, analyzed, and documented or reported the status of the battle so far. "They have managed to obtain and secure an advantage over the Imperial fighters."

"Excellent, looks like the battles in our favor so far; Ace, have you managed to hack their databases yet?"

The smart A.I. reappeared on his pedestal, now brandishing papers of text as he triumphantly looked at the admiral. "Yes sir, I've managed to extract vital Intel before their cyber-defenses were able to stop me."

Ace "handed" the papers over to a virtual drawer, and soon, the admiral had new information all over his tactical screen. He studied the new information, and his earlier amount of cheer was gone, now replaced with slight worry as he re-analyzed the data.

"According to this, that entire fleet has another 2000 plus fighters in reserve!"

"Uh, sir, that's the least of our worries; according to this, they have a whole 'nother sixty plus ships near the fourth planet from the sun. The irregular radiation in the system must be interfering with our long range sensors." A now visibly worried crew began going over and reassessing the battle, the various view screens and battle readouts now updated to show the full amount of numbers the enemy was capable of sending. "This secondary force seems to still be unloading ground forces and materials, but they should be done within the hour. There also seems to be another force incomingâ€¦it's the remainder of the fleet! This is only one third of their total numbers!"

The admiral felt a twinge of fear creep down his spine as he quickly did the calculations. "Ally, what forces are present in battle group Crusade? I need to know their armaments, fighter compliments, and any and all available ordinances on all ships."

"Sending it over now sir!" A beep confirmed this and the admiral quickly went over the details. '30 Troy class frigates, 20 Thanatos class destroyers, 7 Halycon II class light cruisers, 2 Athens class light carriers, and 3 Valiant class heavy cruisers.' He looked towards the countdown; 25 minutes until the battle group came, but 50 minutes until the full force of 350 enemy ships came to bear. It would be his 74 versus more than five times their number.

The obvious choice was to run; he briefly flashed back to the Great War, back when humanity was at the ropes and was slowly being slaughtered by the hundreds. But then he remembered, they were the top dogs now, and they were gonna show these Imperials just who they were messing with. A decision was made

"Hordan! Ready the blitzkrieg pods and alert me when we're in optimum range of our MAC's. Ally, switch priorities from A-1 to 3 to secondary targets, and make targets marked Bravo and Charlie as priority one, signal the rest of the fleet to do the same. Orwell, make sure all rail guns and long range hard light batteries are powered up and aimed at the enemy. And Joker," the pilot at the helm

turned to him, "keep us alive." Said pilot grinned and immediately, the engines surged, sending the cruiser and its sister ships faster into the battle.

"Oh, and Ally, tell the Link to fall back and jump to the nearest colony to relay the current events to HIGHCOM."

As the twelve cruisers closed in on the opposing fleet, the smaller communications ship turned and immediately set course for the nearest colony world.

"Sir, our Falchions have succeeded and have driven back the remainder of the enemy TIE fighters with only fourteen casualties, they are requesting to go ahead with their secondary objective; should we green light them?" Ally looked at the admiral.

He pondered a bit, before he shook his head. "Negative, have first lieutenant Peyton call his men back, they are to form a perimeter around their host ships."

"Right away." Ally quickly relayed the orders to the lieutenant and the fighters soon surrounded their respective ships.

"We've reached the 500,000 km mark sir, optimum range for our blitzkriegs to engage. It'll be another five minutes until we reach the 200,000 mark and be able to effectively use our Hard light accelerator. An additional ten minutes until our MAC's are within maximum engagement range. By then, we'll have passed the 1000 km mark, and reinforcements would be in within ten minutes after that." As Thomas Petrikov finished his battle analysis, all attention turned to the admiral. "We're awaiting your orders sir."

Considering his options, Dawson decided to cut the engagement time in half; he pulled up a secondary map of the current sector of the galaxy. He eventually placed his finger on the 200,000 mark between his forces and the enemy's; "all hands, prepare for micro-slipspace jump to coordinates 113-x, 127-y, and 442-z, Ally, the rest of the fleet is to follow suit."

Ally quickly reviewed the received coordinates, and nodded her head, "right away sir."

As the ships prepared for the micro-jump, the surviving 106 falchions quickly latched onto the hulls of their host ships, and immediately after, twelve tears in the fabric of space were created in front of each cruiser; all ships prepared for the coming engagement, and followed the Algol's lead as they jumped closer to the enemy.

****Imperial Star Destroyer-I Iron Dominion****

****Main Bridge****

****Admiral** **Yularen was dumbstruck to say the least, he watched as over 216 of the Empires new TIE III's were slaughtered by the larger "USOA" fighters; destroying nearly half of their own in two volleys of missiles. 'These newcomers, no, these opposing forces are definitely not a force to be trifled with.' The admiral had to give grudging respect to his enemies, they were definitely not primitive. "Ensign! What's the status of the fleet?"

"The predators have returned to their hangar bays; only 15 of the _New Sun's_ predators, and 12 of the _Steel Heart's_ fighters made it back; we ourselves only have 7 TIEs left, and they're all part of raptor squad." The young officer quickly returned his gaze to the myriad of information flowing across his screen, fully aware of the admiral's somber mood. "Captain Frix is also requesting that he takes two wolf pack to deal with these 'upstarts'."

Yularen pulled up a profile on said captain, skimming through his career and personal info. 'Served since the Clone Wars, intelligent, cunning, overall impressive, but overly zealous, hmmmâ€¦' the admiral carefully planned out his next move. "No, tell him to ready weapons, but don't engage yet; as with the rest of the fleet, get all weapons online and prepare all fighters on the Venators, they will be launching soon." A quick reply from the officer was enough for the admiral.

"Sir, the enemy fighters have just returned to their ships, also, we have passed the 500,000 mark, what are your orders sir?" The collective amount of attention was on the admiral as he debated on his plan of attack.

"First, we shall wait until the next wave of fighters are ready, then we'll--"

"Apologies sir, but large energy spikes emanating from the enemy ships! The energy is gathering at--" Interrupted a young crewman, until another bridge crewman cut him off.

"Admiral, large anomalies have appeared in front of the ships! The ships, they're--"

"They disappeared sir!" Finished the first officer.

The men on the bridge were stunned, but none more than Yularen himself. 'The hell, what just happened, what else could they possibly throw at us!'

Unfortunately, fate decided to be a bitch, and 200,000 km away from the imperial formation, twelve identical spatial anomalies appeared, and out rocketed the twelve said ships. And as one, a blue light crackled to life in between the prongs. Coming out of where the prongs split, two pieces of paneling had split to reveal a cannon which extended itself, and the blue energy was seeping out of it. Raw power bled from the orifice facing them as lightning and tendrils of energy seemed to arc across the barrel, more blue light began emanating from the various holes and panels along the barrel.

"Holy mother of Kriff...thâ€¦the weapons, th-they're emanating more power than our entire ship by itself; andâ€¦they'reâ€¦facingâ€¦"

"THE VENATORS! ENSIGN! GET TH--"

The admiral couldn't finish his sentence as twelve blue beams of raw energy exploded forth from the barrels of the ships, immediately connecting with, and vaporizing the twelve Venators they had been aiming at, blazing through the shielding completely, evaporating the hulls upon contact, and continuing onto the next ship behind them,

and some even continuing onto their third targets; all with the same and predictable results.

As the beams subsided, 29 ships were left with large gaping holes, the edges still glowing with heat, the centers of the holes still radiated with raw leftover excess energy.

As the collective crews of every ship in the sector, both USOA and Imperial, watched the opening salvo fade away, the Imperials' hope began rising, seeing how the ships, even with large 100 m holes going through the entirety of each ship, did not explode. Just as the admiral was about to contact the lead captain aboard the Venator class star destroyer No Such Pity, each reactor aboard every hit ship went critical, vaporizing large sections of each ship and their respective equipment, weapons, and personnel.

The galaxy could only watch as 29 new suns were born, and the true war between the Grand Empire and the United Species of the Orion Arm began.

Meanwhileâ€|

****Andromeda Galaxy****

****Bespin Cloud-City****

****Landing Pad L-13****

****As**** the old Corelian freighter set down, a ramp lowered, and out stepped four individuals; three of which were obviously human, while the fourth was known as a Wookie, a species indigenous to the forest-world of Kashyyyk.

"Waaaaagggghhhh!" roared the hairy ape like creature as he gestured from the man up front to the old ship behind them.

"Yeah yeah, come on Chewie, it'll be quick!" the infamous smuggler known as Han Solo casually replied to 'Chewie'. "We've got plenty of time to spare."

"Waaaaagggghhh, Waaagh!"

As the two continued their "conversation", the other two individuals shared glances with each other, sharing a smile as the smuggler and Wookie continued bickering.

Suddenly, the boy on the left gasped in shock, causing the three of them to immediately look at the man as he fell to his knees.

"Luke! What's wrong!"

"Iâ€|I felt a disturbanceâ€|in the force. It came from, another galaxyâ€|" The young Jedi in training continued massaging his temples and contemplating the event.

'Whatever it was, it was definitely big'

The group finished picking him up, and returned to their previous action of heading into the city, but this time, to meet with the garrison of rebel forces hidden within the various buildings on top

of the floating platform. They would try to communicate with the higher-ups in command, hopefully to discuss the new turn of events.

"Princess, what do you think that was?" Han Solo questioned the fourth member of the group as they were allowed passage deep into the lower levels of the city.

Princess Leia only shook her head, " Only time will tell what that was, but it must have been really big if Luke fell the way he didâ€|"

As the group entered the final chamber, they were unaware of an entity that was busy observing themâ€|

****Unknown Galaxy****

****Unknown Location****

****?*****

And the pieces are finally in placeâ€|****

Errorâ€|cannot computeâ€|syntax-ta-ta-ta-tax error 1-9-1-4-12321 Alpha

Rerouting signal toâ€|failed-d-d-d-dâ€|unable to createâ€|error,error,e-e-e-errorâ€|

**Hmm, thousands of years later, who could have foretoldâ€|**

**Heh, even HE is nothing more than a king in this game of fateâ€|yes, this should be interestingâ€|**

Cannot handle current st-t-t-t-tress levels, reroâ€|seveâ€|discâ€|ingâ€|ERROR

*Static*

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Interesting indeedâ€|****

Read, review, and tell me what you think.

5. A Sleeping Giant

Author's Notes: 2/20/15: I told you guys that that last chapter would be the fastest update *sweatdrop* heheheâ€| but seriously, I'm truly sorry for taking this long, but I'm just not the fastest writer, nor am I the most diligent or focused of people. So, while I'm terribly sorry for the delay, here's the next chapter in Halo:Imperial Contactâ€|****

**Thanks for the reviewsâ€¦**|**

* * *

><p>A Sleeping Giant

2 BBY, Galactic Standard Calendar

Galaxy S-217 Sector SA-03

**Paladin-class attack frigate Righteous **

Main Bridge

**Captain **Leopold Frix was a natural commander, having proven his worth back in the days of the Old Republic; serving under the then chancellor Palpatine, he participated in many battles preceding the exile of the Jedi order, and proved his competence on the field when he personally led several missions hunting down pockets of Jedi that had escaped.

The perfect example of an Imperial officer, he was respected, admired, and feared in his own right; in combat against the rag tag rebel forces, he was in his natural environment.

Now, his habitat was in the process of being torn apart by the new "upstarts".

"Bank right, bank right! Get us out of the way!"

The nimble Paladin class-frigate "dove" right narrowly avoiding the large, high caliber slug that was just sent hurtling its way from the muzzle of one of the new human ships, managing to clear the projectile with a few hundred meters to spare. Unfortunately, the large round managed to impact against the shields of a larger Victory-class, punching straight through the particle shield and bisecting the Victory. Explosions ripped across its hull before the reactor overloaded and evaporated much of the ship, leaving nothing but large chunks of burned, warped hull to drift across the expanse of space.

Having learned early on in the battle, Frix knew better than to stay in the crosshairs of the enemy, else he and his crew suffer the same fate as the Victory, and many other ships that had succumbed to the new human's spinal cannons.

The Imperial lines were in chaos, with nearly half of their once proud warships now nothing but debris and carnage. The surviving ships sent an endless barrage of turbolaser bolts straight towards the formation of UNSC ships, hundreds upon thousands of terrajoules worth of power streaked towards the black and gunmetal grey hulls of their opponents in a fantastic ruby red array of firepower. However, as the bolts neared every ship, they instead slammed into gleaming silver energy shields that sprung up in the space between the sea of red and the upstart's warships.

The shields glowed brightly on the impact points, particularly those points where the heavy turbolaser fire from the Imperial-I's hammered against them, but they still held, and continued holding as bolt after bolt rained down on them.

Seemingly unfazed, the UNSC returned fire; having long passed the 100,000 km mark, the large ships opened up with their MAC's. Enormous 600-ton ferric-tungsten composite uranium tipped slugs raced towards the Imperials, their yellow streaks contrasting greatly with the darkness of the void around them, seeming like yellow shooting stars as they neared the Imperial line. Like Frix and the other Paladin captains, the individual captains of each ship took evasive maneuvers in order to, at the very least, mitigate the sheer amount of destruction the slugs could do on their ships. Not ten seconds later, the slugs hit with varying results all across the space.

The nimbler Paladins and many of the remaining Lancer's easily wove between the rounds staying alive through sheer skill as the helmsman guided them to safety. The larger ships however had to resort to more, creative tactics.

The Strike's and Victory's, while not possessing the same maneuverability as the smaller ship analogues, could still move around better than the larger ships of the fleet. Firing their engines, many broke formation and scattered, making sure not to accidentally wander into the path of another round. While a majority managed to dodge, others still managed to get clipped by the slugs, resulting in ships retaining some damage ranging from major shield depletion, to whole decks being sheared off at the edges of their respective ships.

The much larger Imperial-I's and Venators however, did not have the advantage of smaller tonnage and proportionally larger engines, and as such, could only hope to endure, or deflect the rounds. The star destroyers could, at the very least, take a few glancing blows from the MAC shells; direct hits however, drained their shields from full percent, to an astonishing 30-40 percent range. As such, since they could not move their entire ship out of the way, they settled for the next best thing.

With the rounds fast approaching, the large ships opted to fire their maneuvering thrusters and engines in order to create the necessary angles needed to "ricochet" the UNSC's rounds. Taking advantage of their already slanted design, the captains and admirals would only need to increase the degree of the angles more, creating a "rounding" effect that could better deflect the rounds. Taking the concept from the more "primitive" times of warfare, kinetic weapons such as those used by the UNSC (so far with the exception of those unholy spinal energy cannons), require penetration, or the projectiles actually entering the surface of their targets to inflict damage. By slanting or sloping the surface which the projectile impacts, that increases the overall amount of material the projectile must go through in order to properly penetrate the target. With this increase, penetration is greatly reduced and the chance of the projectile bending and completely deflecting off the intended surface is increased.

With the added benefit of modern shielding technology, this strategy proved sound and secure so far against previous volleys the UNSC had used when the Imperial first began the tactic.

But that was when every ship was running at optimum condition and every ship's shield arrays were fully charged and not strained to the max.

Predictably, the larger and more advanced shield arrays on the Imperial-I's held, with the exception of the New Sun's, whose shield finally deactivated after deflecting its sixth rounds so far. The weakened Venators told a different story.

From the UNSC lines, a total of 122 rounds were launched from the collective muzzles of each ship, some having only one barrel, some with two, others firing two rounds from each barrel, others only unloading one round. Out of that number, 52 managed to find their mark one way or another. Out of the 47 that resulted in kill shots, 42 of those were the once famed and glorified Venators that proved themselves as effective in the times of the Old Republic. Every targeted Venator simply could not withstand the last volley of 600-ton slugs; those who did manage to deflect the rounds could not deal with the backlash that came with it. Every shield was overloaded, some pushed so far past the red line that the shield generators buried within the ships inner workings collapsed, resulting in chains of explosions originating from within to rip the ships from inside out, leaving some warships as nothing but charred hunks of metal, to hollowed out husks that vaguely resembled the ships they once were, but were warped along their hulls where explosions had threatened to burst through. Other shields broke before they had completed their task, allowing the tungsten shells to punch through and shred the ships the old fashioned way. No matter the cause, the result was still 47 new suns being born one way or another.

As the light from the explosions died down, many within the Imperial fleet stared at the new losses, mentally counting the number of service men and women that had lost their lives so far.

After deciding that he had seen enough, Leopold tore his eyes away from the already cooling sections of space that had once held his fellow Imperials onboard much larger ships than his own and resumed control over his frigate.

"Keep up the pressure with our turbolasers! I don't care how little of an effect we have, just focus on bringing those damned shields down!"

"Affirmative."

Thrusters along the hull of the frigate fired up and realigned the ship to face the enemy lines, bringing the turbolasers scattered along the deck of the frigate to bare on the opposing warships.

Designed immediately after the clone wars, the Paladin retained the spear design of the Old Republic ships as opposed to the newer dagger design being implemented across the Imperial Navy. Being only 400 meters, the Paladin wasn't the largest ship by a long shot, nor was it the most powerful, even among other ships of its size. It was however, the fastest ship to be fielded by the Empire in proportion to its size. The oversized engine block and experimental reactors onboard allowing the ship to exceed speeds of even the most nimble of rebel ships, granting a great advantage over the Rebel Alliance.

This advantage proved to be the only thing separating the crews of

the Paladins from life and death against the USOA, the ships' maneuverability proving to be a major asset in keeping them alive. However, the frigate's lackluster arsenal was proving to be a major liability; the smaller, more rapidly firing light turbolaser emplacements seeming to only annoy the USOA's much larger ships.

Volley after volley left the barrels of the relatively small turrets, all barreling towards the enemy formation, the leftmost ship relative to the Imperial line specifically, before they were once again absorbed by the silver, highly durable shields seemingly made of hexagonal panels that appeared whenever the lasers came within fifty meters of the ships.

Said ship, taking notice of the diminutive little thorn in its side, diverted a few of its mid-ranged deck guns to fire on the Righteous, forcing the helmsman to dodge another stream of magnetically accelerated ammunition.

"Son of a Kryff, this is getting us no where!" Frix was visibly frustrated, running his hands through his brow, brushing back his disheveled hair to clear his view. Throughout the bridge, every officer was in a similar state, having fought for over forty five minutes yet having this much trouble was a definite change of pace for the crew of one of the most highly decorated frigates in the Imperial navy. "Status report on the rest of the fleet."

A young man manning the station closest to his left, Ensign Brooks, turned and relayed, "Sir, we've suffered over fifty percent casualties, not including our fighter wings that were aboard the Venators before they were blown away. Out of the total 178 ships that managed to jump in before the Admiral told the rest to hold position, only 92 of us remain; 4 Imperial-I's, 11 Venators, 17 Victory's, 19 Strike-classes, 21 Lancer's, and the original 20 Paladins sir." With a tired sigh, he turned back to his console, and resumed typing.

Frix could only bang his fist on the arm of his chair in pure frustration, before he groaned as he was subjected to massive amounts of G-force, accompanied by the roar of a klaxon and surprised shouts and cries from the bridge. Having been strapped into his seat with crash webbing, he was lucky enough to have avoided tumbling out of his throne and onto the various consoles in front of him. Others were not as fortunate.

"Ughâ€¦ what the hell was that?!"

A cough, "my apologies sir, but we were almost the next victim of those massive spinal slug throwers. I had to initiate the emergency thrusters to completely dodge the shot."

Looking out of the viewport, Frix could clearly tell that this was a loss for the Empire, no matter what; there was no way to salvage the current situation without a much larger force.

"Captain sir? A message from the Admiralâ€¦"

Not taking his gaze away from the USOA ships, he began, "Let me guess, full retreat?"

Silence was the only answer he needed, and soon, the Righteous along with the other ships of the Imperial task force began pulling back, limping away, bruised, beaten and humiliated.

The Troy's, Thanotos', Halycon's, Athens', Valiant's and the original Ontaro's of the USOA fleet opposite them allowed the battered remains of a fleet stagger off, knowing that with them would go a message:

Don't mess with us.

On his personal console, Frix fixed the gaze of one of the external cameras on the USOA ships, holding position, not moving, not firing; just simply allowing them to go, clearly knowing full well that the day belonged to them.

Yet despite himself, Frix could not help but feel the tiniest bit of respect for the new "upstarts". Standing up to more than twice their number yet still managing to come out relatively unscathed.

Remarkable.

And speaking what was on the mind of every Imperial officer to some degree, he simply said:

"We'll be back."

****UNSC Space Sector 251****

****Ontaro-class cruiser Algol****

****July 22, 2582, USOA Military Calendar****

****Main Bridge****

****The**** room was a scene of joy and jubilation, the battle having been a staggering win in their favor, despite seemingly damned odds, the UNSC and by extension, the USOA's first victory against this "Galactic Empire" showed great promise should this type of luck persist.

Joker, Ally and Hordan were sharing embraces among other bridge crew members as Henry observed it all from his position above on the raised platform containing his command seat. Leaning against the safety rails, he couldn't help but allow a smile to cross his usually stoic face, explicitly only seen by those aboard his ship, this rare display of emotion was one of the few he would usually share with his crew.

"It's a beautiful thing you knowâ€|"

Knowing he was addressing him even without saying so, Ace appeared on a pedestal near the right of the Admiral. "May I ask what you are referring to sir?"

A sigh escaped Henry's lips before he straightened a bit, " This, " gesturing towards his fellow officers, " it's a welcome sight, us being able to celebrate after a win like this. Not having to deal with massive casualties after every single damn fightâ€|"

Leaning his head back, he closed his eyes," It's so much different from the Great Warâ€|"

Ace, fully understanding the admiral's viewpoint, crossed his arms in affirmation, shifting his avatar body to the right in a more "relaxed" state. "Yes sir, looks like the days of being the underdog are over."

Taking a moment to savor the scene before him, Dawson sat back down," It's about time."

Checking his console, Henry opened a channel to the lead ship of battle group Crusade, the Valiant-class heavy cruiser "Old Warrior". Within moments, the aged face of another admiral, Admiral Jenn Micari, filled the screen. Uniform cleanly pressed and twice the number of medals as his own adorned her chest, the seasoned officer's piercing blue eyes softened as she regarded Dawson.

"Well well Dawson, you certainly did an excellent job of holding those Imperials at bay. A new hostile civilization, evidently also full of humans, who attacked first, with you outnumbered 1:5 for the better part of the engagement, yet managing with only three ships lostâ€|impressive."

Tightening his fist at the mention of those three lost ships, 2 Troy's and a Thanatos, Henry responded in kind, before they discussed the new circumstances of these events.

Thirty minutes later, with all things in order, the UNSC ships arranged themselves into a new formation, before doing a complete 180 in order to face the way in which they came.

With new information, observations, and collected and salvaged technology from the Imperials in tow, the 71 remaining ships gathered energy in their respective slipspace drives before, as one, large tears in the fabric of reality were opened, and through them, the crews of the first successful engagement against the Galactic Empire began their trek home.

****New Noble, Reach****

****USOA Joint Species Council Chambers****

****July 27, 2582 USOA Standard Military Calendar****

****The **sound of the data crystal ejecting was drowned out by the roars and various forms of applause by the members within the room. The normally reserved and calm (for the most part) representatives had the right to be as exuberant as they were, having witnessed an immense victory over what seemed to be an overconfident and tyrannical hostile civilization.**

Even the bloodthirsty Tartarus II was pounding his chest in approval, a sure sign to the president of the USOA that the rest of the meeting would definitely go in his favor. Taking a stand, his seat retracted before the floor in front of him split to allow a miniature set of stairs to form, leading onto the table itself.

"As you can see ladies and gentlemen, this Galactic Empire has

willingly and deliberately chosen to take hostile action against us. Without provocation, without a true reason other than us simply existing, they have already labeled us as "affronts" to their governmentâ€|"

Taking slow, calculated steps, Dimitri slowly ascended the miniscule stairway, "Without taking into consideration our history, our cultures, our own thought into this matter, they openly decreed that the only solutions would be to assimilate, or to be conquered. In order to avoid their emperor's wrath, we should cower down, hands on our knees, and pray for mercyâ€|"

His hardened onyx eyes fixed themselves on every representative as he passed them, all eyes were focused, determined, calmly awaiting for his speech to climax. "Five days ago, our galaxy bore witness to the arrivals of a new faction, an infant in this area of space where we have dwelled in for thousands of years. Demanding for our submission, our complete compliance, as if we were but babes just coming into existence, as if we have no choice in the matterâ€|"

By now, the collective audience was enraptured in Dimitri's words, hitting home places that struck chords within their alien hearts. "Acting as if they have suffered as we have, as if they have endured what we were forced toâ€|"

"Lies told for centuries, near millenniums, lies about religions and gods and a false hopeâ€|" The Sangheili's mandibles clenched as their eyes hardened, remembering the days long pastâ€|

"Years of oppression, with almost nothing to live for as the lives of many were wasted for nothingâ€|" The respirators of each Unggoy seemed to hitch as they lowered their heads, images of the many that had fallen for pointless causes over the course of their historyâ€|

"Conflicts that threatened to wipe out some people's hopes for peace and unityâ€|" The mighty head of Tartarus dipped down as he went silent, counting the times his species nearly committed genocide on themselves just trying to leave their planetâ€|

"A war that pushed a species into a corner, a species that was fighting for their very right to live in a galaxy full of enemies; pushed to the brink with seemingly nothing left to lose yet everything on the lineâ€|" Every human found themselves unconsciously clenching their armrests, memories and horrors playing through their mindsâ€|

Reaching the center of the table, Dimitri Sanatos regarded every being inside of the room, locking eyes with each as their heads came back up, eyes burning like the fires of every planet that had played host to a battle in the Human-Covenant war naught but 30 years prior.

"This will NOT stand."

Short and simple, the sentence broke the dam that held back the representatives emotions, and a flood of cheers and roars resounded throughout the room.

"We will NOT submit to this Galactic Empire. We will NOT bow down to

this emperor. We will NOT allow these arrogant fools to walk over us without so much as a fight. Ladies and gentlemen, this is our chance to prove to the rest of the intergalactic community that we are here, we are a power. We are not scattered and disorganized, we are unified, and together, we are strong, and will NOT tolerate such treatment!"

Another round of applause.

"Five days ago, we gained access to the Imperial's files; we, at the very least, have maps and basic intel on their section of space." Stepping back, Sanatos activated the holoprojector and brought up an image of another sector of space, a relatively close galaxy compared to others in relation to the Milky Way: the Andromeda Galaxy.

"I propose we issue a formal declaration of war, to be voted on in congress, against the sovereign and hostile Galactic Empire, in the name of self-defense against a potential future threat, in justified retaliation against that particular government for taking the lives of the men and women aboard the three ships they destroyed, and in response to the large wave of terror they spread to the populace due to their message."

Roars of approval were the only answer he needed, and soon, the meeting was over. Gathering his files and straightening his tie, Demitri made his way to the door, only to pause as he noticed that a certain figure was leaning against the door frame. Exchanging looks with his guards who were tensed and apprehensive, they left, the figure moving aside to let the Spartans through.

Checking his watch, Demitri addressed the figure, "Yes Tartarus?"

With his head cocked to the side and his arms crossed, Tartarus paused before explaining, "There's more isn't there."

Demitri, unresponsive at first, allowed a small smirk to cross his features, "Leave it to the great ape to figure out that there's a catch to all of this."

Uncrossing his arms and taking on a more aggressive stance the Jiralhanae pushed on. "Well? Why would you just declare war "right off the bat" as you humans say? I know you Sanatos, you aren't one to rush blindly into conflicts, not anymore. What else is there? What did you leave out?"

Pausing, Demitri strode over to the window overlooking the vast expanse of the jewel of Reach, reflecting the great strides humanity had taken in reclaiming its fortress amongst the stars. Taking a few more moments, Demitri finally answered, "The Galactic Empire isn't the only faction in Andromeda."

From behind, Tartarus only furrowed his brow, recrossing his arms as he registered what the president had just said. "Another? Then why not mention it in the meeting?"

Smirking again while looking at the neighboring skyscrapers, Demitri responded, "Simple political manipulation my old friend. Unneeded and unnecessary as it may seem, I don't want to reveal all the information about this galaxy to the public yet. You see this

faction, they're rebelling against their tyrannical government, one that's oppressed them for too long; you can guess which governments' the culprit." A grunt, "This information hits the public too soon, the effect won't be as large; but if timed right, we can get full support for this conflict, increase the public's views on our military, improve relations, allow for more fundingâ€|"

"But why?! What are you planning Sanatos?"

â€|

"Sanatos!"

â€|

Finally turning back around, Demitri Sanatos had a neutral expression. "I intend to introduce ourselves to this "Rebel Alliance" first by displaying our might, our strengthâ€|"

A wide grin broke open on his face. "â€|and what better way to show our strength than project: Monsâ€|"

As if on cue, the projector reactivated, and this time, it displayed what seemed to be billions, no, trillions of little particles, which then began "assembling" themselves.

To himself Tartarus thought, 'Not particles, they're parts, and they're makingâ€|a ship?..."

Tartarus' confusion soon gave way to horror as the outline of the ship made itself apparent, the projection showing the specifics of the ship, its dimensions, possible armament, possible power outputâ€| and to Tartarus, it was almost too much to comprehend.

Project:

Mons

Classification:

Top Secret; Omicron-level clearance

Designation:

Terra-class experimental super dreadnaught

****Olympus Mons****

* * *

><p>So the plot advances, plans are already underway, the Empire now has a new foe to take care of, and the UNSC is already showing its hand, at least to one of its allies, this early into the gameâ€| What's to come of these developments?

Read, Review, and Tell me what you think

6. Quickstart

**Author's Notes: 3/12/15 Thank you all for the positive feedback on the last chapter, writing has been slightly easier lately due to the decrease in schoolwork so chapters shouldn't take months on end to complete like before ****:D**

**Update: 7/23/15 â€| soooooooooâ€| completely disregard the whole "writing becoming easier bit," again, extremely sorry but right after I posted that chapter and wrote the above note, I was IMMEDIATELY bombarded with finals, AP tests, projects, the whole shebang and writing was pushed back till I basically forgot about it. Anyways, finally finished it, here's the next chapter, and a few responses.**

_**Downhillrabbitt6 - you can count on that. Since I've started this, it's my duty to finish it, to keep writing to the end. There are many great stories here on this site, some **__**so incredibly well written that they should honestly publish their works and create some standalone material (or replace the actual canon with their fanmade work :D). However, many stories that were gaining incredible popularity or achieved great heights have also been lost; their writers losing interest, the material losing popularity, the list goes on. I do not plan on abandoning this until I feel that there is nothing left to write. I may disappear from time to time, but I will always be back with more.**_

_**Diamond Man - that was a pretty funny and much needed review so thanks. **__**Liam Neeson is the bomb dot com B)**_

_**Guest **__**- I give you MOAR**_

**And now onto the storyâ€|**

* * *

><p>Kickstart

Orbit of Themeros

Thanatos-class heavy destroyer **_Archangel**_

November 17, 2582, USOA Military Calendar

**The **armored bulk of the ship groaned as it was subjected to the onslaught of G-forces, the dying star signifying the ruins of its sister ship slowly cooling as the expanding force from the blast continued to push away everything surrounding it. The Thanatos groaned even more as its engines flared to life, realigning the destroyer and bringing its heavily armored bow to bear. Not sparing even a few seconds, ruby red and emerald green hammered against sterling silver in a display of power.

From within the ship, crew members continued on their orders, a bit more frantic compared to the usual calm, collected atmosphere, however such a break from the norm was expected; they were in the heat of battle after all.

From the depths of the ship, a large 800 ton slug was prepped, the cyclers within the loading chamber activating and loading the round

into the firing chamber. The darkness of the "room" soon dissipated as the electromagnetic propulsion system, already hot from previous use, powered on again, the large rails responsible for propelling the round thrumming with energy. A pause ensued as the second firing chamber was loaded, and the ship aligned itself with its targets. The destroyer trembled as the first of the two rounds rocketed out of the barrel, a deep thump being the only indication of its expulsion from the barrel, as went the silencing principles of the vacuum of space. From within, a massive clank resounded as the second round entered the hot firing room, and soon, it too exited the barrel of the warship in an almighty flash.

The entire process took a grand total of six seconds.

Inside the ship, buried within the armored belt of the kilometer long vessel, two blips on a large tactical screen blinked out of existence, a nearly unnoticeable change within the sea of red that faced the USOA's more humbly sized fleet. Captain Joseph Reynaldi could only grimace as more information flooded in from the BattleNet, particularly, the near unnoticeable change from the enemies ranks.

"Captain, the life boats from the _Chimera_ have been collected, we are moving the survivors to storage bay three and the injured to the medical deck."

"Two more confirmed kills from our MAC sir, power output is holding at a steady ninety percent. Blitzkrieg and Archer II pods are reloading, Hailfire cannons are operating at eighty percent maximum capacity. Shields are at forty five percent and steadily dropping, not too fast though."

Reynaldi nodded slowly, 'so far so good...'

"Captain! Enemy reinforcements--"

"Goddamnit!" 'and there went my moodâ€|'

Turning his attention to the tactical screen, more red blips joined the already massive conglomeration that permeated the near entirety of the top half of the layout. That had been the entirety of the battle thus far, and if it were any indication, would be for the rest of the war.

It had been established that the UNSC and its allies held the technological advantage in all respects, their ground, air and space forces holding back the Imperial tide in almost all engagements. Howeverâ€| that was basically it, they could _hold them back_. The act of driving the Imperial vermin back from a fortified location seemed to be as impossible as the act of Hercules killing the hydra before he found its weakness. The Imperial forces may have lacked _technologically_, _numerically_ however, the Imperial forces never seemed to end, if anything, their numbers only _multiplied_!

It had barely been four months since the USOA officially declared war on the Galactic Empire, using slipspace to jump to the furthest Imperial outpost, relaying the message throughout the entirety of the HoloNet, then proceeding to decimate the outpost and the surrounding Imperial forces. Since then, the advance upon Imperial space had been gradual, the only obstacle in the invasion having been the Imperials

numbers. Technological advantage had already been established, however, another glaring one-up the USOA had on the Imperials seemed to be the Imperials lack of practical combat tactics.

The Imperial ships literally sat, in the same position, and fired away at their forces, the ships would jump in, get comfy-cozy in a seemingly premade spot in the block consisting of the Imperial lines, and fire without discretion. The only exception to this rule seemed to be the smaller, faster ship analogues, dodging and weaving between fire like large scale fighters.

The surface of the Thanatos roared to life as multiple missile pods opened up and spat their contents to the void, all sixty Blitzkrieg pods emptying a total of twenty missiles each into the void. The missiles themselves were a result of Covenant and human engineering, the plasma coated fusion warhead was designed to melt through shields and armor, before delivering its fifty megaton payload within the enemy ship in the form of a large explosion. As opposed to the Archer's who exploded on impact, the Blitzkriegs were designed as space "bunker busters," causing massive internal damage; the fact that the holes ripped apart upon impact from the inch-thick plasma coating were five feet in diameter was a bonus in the form of external damage.

A veritable swarm of missiles left the destroyer; one hundred twenty Blitzkrieg missiles were joined by two hundred forty of their Archer II brethren. That swarm soon multiplied into a tsunami as the entire fleet added their own barrage, the sheer amount of missiles forming a screen that quickly raced towards the Imperial's rapidly retreating forces.

The Imperial lines shifted their focus from the ships themselves to the impending rain of ballistics, immediately deviating the ocean of red energy towards the onslaught, if only to lessen the damage if not outright stop it.

****Imperial-I Star Destroyer **_**Halberd**_**

****CIC****

****Admiral Hovard Nouvelle****

****Klaxons ****blared and men and women scrambled as the impending firestorm raced towards their formation. The main bridge was a scene of chaos and urgency as everyone panicked at the sheer amount of missiles bearing down on them.

Facing a sea of turbolaser fire? That was commonplace in their galaxy, the standard of space naval warfare since the conception of particle beam enhancement through Tibanna Gas was made practical. That's what the ships of the Empire were designed for, taking and giving enormous volumes of laser, particle beam, and turbolaser fire. Through years upon years of research, experiments, and lots of trial and error, the galaxy had shaped space naval warfare into a bloody knife fight between fleets, with the winner decided by who had more ships.

It had been that way for centuries, in the times of the Old Republic, and in the new Galactic Civil War, with the exception of the Rebel's more, extreme tactics.

However, that was not the case for these new hostiles, by the combined force of the Siths and Jedi that was not the case by _any_ margin. These people had shaped their engagement doctrine on long range engagement, with enormous caliber railguns, directed energy weaponry, _weaponized plasma!_ The enemy could even hold their own in close quarters, with innumerable ballistic and energy â€œcentric gun emplacements lighting up the space between them. The biggest surprise, and by far the most troublesome and terrifying, were the USOA's missile capability.

Every single ship had launched _hundreds_ upon _hundreds_, _of_ missiles each, and not one of them seemed to be running low on supply if the sheer volume they kept launching at them were to be taken into account! The species of the Andromeda galaxy were no stranger to missiles, they were still used in warfare after all. But these were slow-moving, relatively low caliber concussion missiles, made for supplementary bombardment should additional fire power call for it. They were basically glorified space grenades that could move at the speed of the average rebel Y-Bomber. These, _monstrosities_, moved at hypersonic speeds, with the capability to _dodge_ and _avoid_ their own _starfighters_, _in numbers_ that overshadowed _their_ starfighters!

Never, had such a situation been considered a possibility, and as such, they were oh so woefully underprepared for such an attack; hence, the mass panic throughout the fleet.

"Enemy missileâ€¦|_barrage_â€¦| approaching fast! ETI is thirty seconds!"

"Flak and CIWS are being overwhelmed, they cant pick them all off!"

"Starfighters are unable to intercept them all! Estimate at least 90 percent of those things will impact!"

"Our shields are already strained as they are sir! Same across the fleet, we'll be slagged this rate!"

"Orders sir!?"

Nouvelle could only stare as the countdown passed the twenty second mark. '_For the good of the many, sacrifice the few. Emperor forgive me._'

"Order all Venators to release all fighter wings and set course in front of the main line, abandon ship except for a skeleton bridge crew, they are to absorb as many missiles as they can, once don-"

"Sir! You can't be serious!"

"They are the most lightly armed of all our ships and can take the most punishment tonnage wise! Get it done NOW!"

Hot-blooded protests gave way to grudging compliance as the order resounded throughout the fleet. The Venators all released small swarms of their reserve fighters and shot off, leaving various lifeboats in their wakes as they moved to intercept the horde of

missiles.

The Archers and Blitzkriegs "howled" as they closed in, their internal guidance systems going off as they detected obstacles between their intended targets. And as designed, they moved to engage the obstacles the only way they knew how.

Obliterate them.

The blitzkriegs moved forwards, with the archers following behind, as they plunged war-head first into the line of sacrificial ships. With them taking the lead, they were able to puncture through the weakened shields and burrow into the armor, passing through abandoned decks and rooms, burning a path through the bulwark of the ships. Reaching the end of their lifeline, the first line of Blitzkriegs detonated, with the next continuing on and finishing what was started. Not five seconds after the Venators and missiles crossed paths, the tsunami of Archers and Blitzkriegs that had engaged the doomed ships returned to formation with the remainder of the missiles, their numbers cut down to three fourths of their previous count, with a significant amount of the latter missing. The resulting explosions of the Venators knocked a few straggling missiles out of target, yet the wave continued on, "howling" in "delight" as they neared their targets.

The red and green energy flak and laser fire intensified as they neared, some even managing to pick off from their number, but such losses were insignificant in such a large quantity.

The tsunami finally impacted with horrifying results, across the tactical screens, friendly icons began blinking out of existence. Victory's, Paladin's, Carriers, and various Star Destroyers succumbing to their fate.

Harold Nouvelle, in the face of such danger, kept as calm as possible, knowing that the chances for survival were slim as he counted eight bright lights heading towards his own ship.

Two impacted against the shields, breaking them. Three smashed onto the bow, throwing the ship nose-down with the force of a warship-sized sucker punch.

Flying through his own command bridge, he briefly noted that the final three were to impact across various parts of his ship, with one, coming straight for his bridge.

Accepting his fate, he was granted some reprieve as he smashed nose first into a console, falling into blissful unconsciousness as the darkness welcomed him.

"IMPACT!"

****New Var's City****

****Southern-most continent of Themeros****

****2BBY, Galactic Standard Calendar****

****Ducking ****into the relative safety of a bombed-out market, Private Ne'so Fortima breathed in and out, attempting to calm his heart as he

reassessed his situation.

'_Squad's gone, communications gone, ammoâ€|almost gone.'"_

Slotting the half-empty energy cartridge back into the slot, he hefted his D-12-3 blaster rifle back into firing position and gently peeked out of the corner of his cover. The bleached white armor of his helmet, streaked gray from soot, dirt and other substances, matched the burned and destroyed landscape around him, for once actually camouflaging him in his surroundings as opposed to making him stick out like a bleached thumb.

He silently cursed as he was forced to lean out a bit more, not for the first time wishing the empire had retained the old armor designs of the phase-1 clone troopers of the republic rather than switching to the newer stormtrooper phase-2 armor.

'_Improvements my ass, at least the old helmets didn't look as stupid as these.'" _

Declaring his route clear, he immediately set out down the street, sticking to the shadows to avoid detection. Searching the skies, he immediately caught sight of multiple clouds of smoke, before picking out the darkest of them and immediately started off in the opposite direction.

'Darker the smoke, heavier the fighting, gotta find one of our outposts."

He continued along the narrow street, wary of any ambushes or traps hidden among the rubble, boots crunching against gravel, rocks and debris. He reached an intersection and immediately flattened himself against the wall, inching closer to the opening. Peeking his head out, he barely saw a flash against his visor before he violently threw himself away from his previous location.

The wall he had used as cover shattered and a resounding crack reaffirmed his instincts and he immediately bolted into an adjacent door. Cursing his luck, he rushed through the once orderly lobby he found himself in, now a mess and completely ruined as he dashed away from his soon to be pursuers.

Since the beginning of the engagement, the Empire learned just what those "primitive" slug throwers and their wielders were truly capable of. They had expected savage and reckless tactics, blind rushes and bold risky maneuvers from the newcomers. They were used to dealing with smaller numbers, having been engaged with the rebels for nearly two years now, and expected as much from the USOA as the ragtag rebellion. For that reason, and many others, they were caught blissfully unaware with their pants on their heads with what these new humans and their allies were capable of, and with all honesty, who was to blame them?

Handheld railgun technology? Saurian aliens, seven feet tall, and wielding lightsabers? _Personal energy shielding on every enemy unit?_ Just what the hell had they gotten themselves into?!

That wasn't to say the empire couldn't put up a fight, as Ne'so vaulted over a ruined couch, he caught sight of five of those distinctly human figures sprawled on the ground in a circle, their

rugged, advanced armor having been blackened, burned and melted away no doubt from several thermal detonators. While unable to kill in one shot like they were used to, the Imperial forces still found their equipment to be adequate in dealing with the invaders. Taking five shots to down their shields, and three direct bolts to put them down for good (ten to make those larger aliens just fall down and _stay _down), it was harder than the norm, but it was manageable.

Finally reaching the back of the building complex, he braced himself, crossing his arms in front of his face, and smashed through the weakened window and onto the street beyond.

Recovering quickly, he glanced up, and upon seeing the white-washed boots of his comrades, immediately took a knee, and directed his focus behind him, not even bothering to find out who he had run into. "Hostiles coming up on my six!"

Not two seconds later, three of the small, gas-mask wearing enemies ran out, each holding two small, ring looking devices with energy seeping out of the "barrel" and the third holding a larger, yellow rifle of some sort on its shoulder. Both they and Ne'so were surprised when four large laser bolts impacted in front of them, blowing them backwards back into the building. Turning, he saw that he had bumped into a small squadron of the city's mechanized defense forces, with nine stormtroopers, two AT-RT's and a recon trooper at his back.

Immediately, the recon trooper grabbed him by his back and hauled him towards cover. "There's always more when those little buggers are here."

Not even bothering to respond, he swiftly brought his blaster to bear, and depressed the trigger once he saw another enemy, this time, it was one of the human contacts.

The action sent a signal to the inner mechanics of his rifle, with Tibanna Gas energizing itself from the energy of his blaster's power cell. Compressed within another chamber within, the now energy saturated beam was then focused through the specialized prismatic crystal, separating it into three high energy particle beams that tore out of his blaster, impacting against the shields of his intended target.

The figure stumbled back, the force of the bolts shattering the shields and stunning the man, before he recovered and dived to the side to evade another trio of energy bolts.

Ne'so continued firing, blasting chunks out of the man's cover while the USOA soldier tried to fire back, his shots going wide as he couldn't adequately aim without fear of his head being taken off. He was joined by four others, one of which immediately pulled out a long, strangely shaped cylinder from his back.

The call of "Rocket" and another of "Ar pee gee(?)" were heard at the same time, and all of the Imperial forces dove for cover. The infantry-fired rocket tore towards one of the AT-RT's, the pilot just barely managing to leap away from the projectile. The rocket exploded, sending the already airborne mech into a wall, landing unsteadily as it reeled from the impact. The other walker immediately set its blasters on the enemy position, smoke and debris erupting

from the rapid fire bombardment of the area. From the haze, another rocket shot out and struck the walker's left leg, sending it and its pilot to the ground.

Priming a detonator, the recon trooper next to him stood and hurled the grenade into the smoke. It most likely hit one of the surviving enemies, if the sounds of confusion coming from the building were any indication. Those sounds were immediately cut off upon detonation, replaced with silence and the sound of some material boiling/melting.

The recon trooper flipped some form of an antennae down in front of his visor and began scanning the ruins of the building, before giving the all clear.

Nodding, Ne'so placed his blaster on his back, and moved to help check on the downed AT-RT. He helped another trooper lift the walker up as another hauled the pilot from under the mech.

"Damn, the fall did a number on him, scans are counting two broken ribs, punctured lung, broken arm, multiple lacerations and several other bruises and minor wounds. This squad isn't outfitted with a medic, so we might as well-

The trooper was interrupted by the recon trooper, who had put his hand on his shoulder and politely asked him to move, while subtly gesturing that he had medical supplies in his pack. The first trooper was as confused as Ne'so was, but let him kneel next to the injured mech pilot.

Now that Ne'so thought about it, what was a recon trooper doing in the middle of a city? Now that the skirmish was over, he could study the trooper just a bit more closely.

'_Not recon trooper, recon officerâ€|" _He hadn't noticed at first, but the man had on a pauldron on his left shoulder. Additionally, there were some, interesting marks along the back, and most likely continuing to the front of his armor. They didn't coincide with marks made from combat, not with any of the new forces at least. They looked like some sort of burn marks? No, scorch marks? Before he could examine further, the officer stood up, slinging the pilot over his shoulders before gesturing towards down the street, most likely the direction they had been travelling to before the engagement.

"Alright men, we are to continue back to the temporary forward command center set up at the large shopping complex. We've got injured, so we are to proceed with caution. Benks, Fargo, you two take point with Hardwire and go ahead. Femur, Stoll, you two keep to the sides and blasters up, scan those rooftops, we don't need another sniper ambush. Everyone else, form a box, lets get back alive shall we?"

A swift "Sir!" answered him, and two troopers plus the surviving mech moved forwards, intent on scouting and clearing out their route. Turning his attention to Ne'so, he addressed him directly, "Alright rookie, identify yourself."

"Private Ne'so Fortima, 354th infantry, my squad and I were stationed aboard the _Starlight_ before we were deployed to the southern

district. We were supposed to rendezvous with alpha company to assist in the defense of the military checkpoint there. None of us made it, we ran into an ambush halfway to the rendezvous and never heard from alpha. I'm the last of my squad.

The officer nodded before gesturing with his head to follow them. "Alright then "Smokey", just follow us to the HQ, at least there you'll receive some proper orders."

Puzzled at the name, he glanced around before realizing he was referring to him. "Uh, sir, I never mentioned my name, callsign or otherwise being "smokey."

"True, but your armor says otherwise, and I call 'em like I see 'em. Besides, I can't exactly call you "shiny", so the former will have to do." Turning forward he set out at a light jog, the rest of the squad following suit.

Pausing to comprehend what he just heard, and the origins of his "name", Ne'so simply shook his head, and moved to follow, before he called out to his superior. "What about you sir? I can't exactly go around the base referring to my savior as 'sir'."

Stopping mid step, the officer turned, and for the first time, Ne'so noticed peculiar markings above his visor, hidden slightly behind the bill of his helmet as if the armor was added on above the marking as a second thought.

"You can call me Rex."

* * *

><p>Aaaaaaaaand end scene! Whoo, this should have been done ages ago! Anyways, The war is underway, the Empire and the USOA have engaged on the ground and in the vacuum of space, all for the rights to control the planet of Theremos. What is there on the planet that's making the Empire send in wave after wave to defend it? What is the USOA planning next? When will the alliance come into play? Read review and tell me what you think

7. Dodge and Weave

**Author's Note: 12/16/15 Ooooooooookay so getting back into the knack of writing, and while there isn't as much feedback as usual; I guess I'm to blame for that. Like I said, I'm not the most consistent writer, and while I try to fit writing in, I still have to deal with personal issues, family, friends, the ongoing school yearâ€|yeah, not much positive influence at the moment. **

**Horizon Unleashed: I'm sorry to you, and the other readers who wait too long for these updates. I know it's entirely my fault but I try to balance out what's necessary and unnecessary and writing ain't really at the top of the list. I'm trying to make updates more consistent, but it'll never be a sure thing that one comes out every week or so.**

**SmokeTinyTom: After posting that chapter, I thought the exact same thing :D I might make a 40k-Halo crossover, the fanbase for it may be dead, but it would be so fun!**

**Reichenfaust: Shhhhhhhh, the clones' will play their parts, things aren't as they seem in the Imperials' ranksâ€|**

**Earth Patriot: Rollin it out now**

**James Ryan, Tommy298: Spartans will always be in EVERY Halo story, but the question of whether Chief, or the other canon Spartans appearing is still in debate.**

**Edboy4926: Thank you**

**And nowâ€|onto the storyâ€|**

* * *

><p>Dodge and Weave**

**Klant'kut Mountain Range**

**Kashyyyk**

**2 BBY Galactic Standard Calendar **

The whine of the gunship's already ghostly engines lessened as it lowered itself down onto the snowy outcropping, allowing the three occupants within to step out. Once clear, it lifted itself up again, turning on its axis and shot off towards the northern edge of the expansive forest with nothing but the whisper of the wind to betray its presence.

The three individuals paid the ship no mind, its task having been done, and strode towards the barren cliff face, stopping just shy of the rocky surface. The figure in the center walked slightly ahead of his companions, hands, barely peeking out from the sleeves of his robes, held loose at his sides. The other two loosely holding their blasters pointed down, their polarized visors reflecting nothing as they simply gazed straight ahead.

"The call for peace goes unanswered amongst the cheer for violence."

The hood of the robe slightly raised itself, before a gravelly voice responded to the sentence that had seemingly emanated from all around them.

"So the call changes to war, and all is appeased."

For a few seconds, nothing happened, then within the blink of an eye, the three figures vanished, seemingly disappearing into the thin mountain air.

His hood whipped back to reveal the smirking face of a young human male, his body open in a spread eagle formation as he and his companions dropped. In the distance, a faint speck of light appeared, growing larger and larger until it was apparent that the source of the illumination was a pool of magma, the liquid, superheated rock bubbling as it grew larger and larger to the perspective of the three.

The group raced towards the clearly gigantic pit of molten rock, for all purposes as if to splash into it like one would after leaping from the diving board into a pool. Then, meters before impact, the robed human flipped himself into an upright position, throwing his arms out behind him and his companions in the direction of the wall.

Psionic energy, collected within his body, and controlled by his will through the midichlorians in his body, manifested themselves in a visible wall of force, pushing himself and his two guards forward and into a large side cavern above the pit of magma.

The figure landed on his hands, pushing himself forwards in a lazy front flip before landing gracefully on the tip of a stalagmite, one foot hanging loosely in the air, the other balanced on the rock formation by the tip of an armored boot.

The other two also landedâ€¦just not with as much grace.

Landing on his stomach, the first figure impacted against the ground with an audible thud, choosing to lay there seemingly content with his helmeted face against the ground.

The other smacked against the ground on his back, sliding across the rocky surface before crashing into the far side of the cavern. Gingerly lifting his head, he rose a bit, only to be brought back down by a rock that had dislodged itself from its perch on a rocky shelf above him, landing right on his head with a hollow thunk.

Seemingly unperturbed, the robed man hopped off his position and began walking to the wall his companion had just met, a bit to the left of said companion.

The figure on the ground groaned before it unsteadily got to its feet, and followed with a bit of annoyance. "I hate that entrance, why do we always use that entrance!"

The robed man smiled, and turned without stopping, "It's the fun way in, come oooooon, loosen up a bit!"

"Pshh, look who's telling who to loosen up." Passing by the last figure, the irritated voice spoke up while grabbing the person's leg. "Come on, let's catch up to him before he 'accidentally' locks us out again."

A long, pain filled moan answered him as the sounds of dragging filled the air, armor plating scraping against rock as the two moved to catch upâ€¦before they reached a door at the end of the cavern.

A locked door.

'Okay, okay, no big deal, just wait for the guards to open up like always, in aboutâ€¦' he checked his data pad, 'ten minutes.'

Feeling a rise in heat, Zepio Felix turned ever so slightly as to look behind himâ€¦and immediately noted the rising layer of magma threatening to spill out from the pool and into the chamber.

It was the third Wednesday of the month: eruption day.

Checking his watch, he realized they still had nine minutes, eruptions took eight once the heat started rising.

He looked up

At a locked door.

* * *

><p>Striding in with a wide grin, the robed man moved through the halls of the facility, the interior lighting exposing the bright, slate colored walls in all their unadorned glory. Every few seconds, a person or a group of people wearing a navy blue uniform would pass, some with white labcoats on, some with various jackets, all avoiding him. When he had a grin on, something was bound to, or had already happened.

Reaching a keypad secured door, he punched in a series of numbers with practiced ease, before the reinforced, triple layered blast doors unsealed and slid out of the way, allowing the person to view the enormous room beyond.

The room was impressive, filled with what could have been over two hundred personnel working at various consoles all over the three story tall space, moving around with a diligence only seen in those who had experience. Screens, consoles, readouts, tactical pads, all blazing with life as information was passed in nano seconds to each individual to be assessed, analyzed, categorized, and filed away for use into the Alliance database. Dominating the center of the massive room, was a towering three story tall projection of the Andromeda Galaxy.

This was the central hub of Alliance Reconnaissance and Intelligence; this was the ARI command center.

Leaning on the rails overlooking the massive hologram of the room, was a woman in an interesting outfit; stark white pants tucked into black armored boots, a green sleeveless shirt that hugged her figure was obscured by a large grey jacket, embellished by nothing other than silver Alliance symbols on the shoulders of the jacket. In her lightly tanned hands was a mug half full of a steaming brown liquid. Dirty blonde hair was pulled into a simple pony tail that fell over the front of her left shoulder. A sleek black firearm was folded and strapped to the back of her hip.

Upon hearing the sound of the door opening, she took a sip of her drink, her head dipping back a bit to allow the warm liquid to reach her, blonde pony tail falling off of her shoulder to reveal that the ends of it were braided in an ornate and intricate pattern.

"You're late."

Looking sheepish, the robed man stumbled a bit at the statement, before reaching behind his head to scratch at an imagined itch. "Well, there were complications

"Complications don't hold up our best man for weeks on end when all he was supposed to do was extract a data core from one of the

Empire's outer worlds. A simple snatch and grab."

"Well, you see-"

"Then, we receive word that an Imperial shipyard, one previously unknown to us, had somehow blown itself up, due to 'mysterious circumstances', with the images of three figures running away from its destruction, the only 'evidence'.

"About that, well-"

"Next, three men are found in the middle of the Attamaca Dessert by the Hutts in the remains of two stolen and heavily modified sand crawlers. Fighting and killing the influential Hutt crime lords, the same three men then flee the planet of Rubio aboard a pirated Imperial-I Star Destroyer."

"Now that was-"

"Finally, said Imperial-I, shows up at our doorstep, weapons hot, shields strained, bypassing all security codes, with a certain someone's face plastered across every vidscreen in this base asking us to let you in."

"Hey, in my-"

"What in the nine Coreillian Hells! We're you thinking! This was a simple mission to one of the most unguarded," "Miliaâ€|" "and forgotten Imperial mining outposts to see where," "Miliaâ€|" "they get their supply of Ortoo roots for their bacta tanks," "Milia..!" "and you and your friends decide to go and have a party and-"

The now-named Milia continued ranting, now empty mug waving around in the air in accordance with its owner's frantic arm movements as she listed the many wrongs he had done.

Seeing that there was no calming her down with words, the man simply walked forward, grabbing her arms to avoid getting punched, and pressed his lips against hers.

Stormy green eyes opened wide, before, slowly closing as she relaxed into the kiss. They continued for a few more seconds before Milia pulled away, her expression becoming one of annoyance. "You're impossible Galen."

"I aim to please," Galen Marek quipped.

Scoffing, Milia turned back to the rails, laying one hand on top of the cool metal as the other placed her empty mug on a service droid to be carried to the mess hall for a refill. "In all seriousness though, what you and your boys did was reckless, _especially_ the Star Destroyer bit."

"Reckless as it was, we now have the tech of a fully functioning Imperial-I at our disposal, and the Empire lost an additional asset, or should I say, assets, in that shipyard when we blew it sky high." Crossing his arms and leaning them on the rail, Galen eyed the galactic map.

Intrigued, Milia followed suit, "What kind of assets are we talking

about?"

Reaching within his robes, Galen withdrew a data crystal and handed it to her. "I believe you'll find this particularly useful information for the future. I also managed to glean some additional information regarding the Empire's sudden decrease in manpower in multiple sectors."

Raising an eyebrow, Milia turned to face him fully, "First you had my interest, now you have my attention. What's the situation?"

"You'll find the answer and more in that drive. The answer quite frankly isâ€¦astounding."

"How so?"

"The force is trembling, I can feel it, everyone can, something big is happening that's drawn the dull attention of the entirety of the Galactic Empire. And I have the feeling we're gonna be caught right in the midst of it."

Now both eyebrows went up, before they furrowed as she turned her attention o the data crystal in her palm. Turning the storage device in her hands, she pocketed it, before once again focusing her gaze on the man next to her. "Galen, I'm serious, don't worry us like you did."

Noticing the softening of her eyes, he moved closer and pushed the stray hairs off her face, gently cupping her cheek in his hand as he drew closer. "Hey, im sorry for worrying, you, but it comes with our line of work."

Moving into his touch, she nuzzled against him," I know, but stillâ€¦Galen, what happened back thenâ€¦"

He silenced her with another kiss, before hugging her closer," What happened is the past, that person will never exist again, he's gone, and I'll make sure he never comes about again.

Turning, he then started walking in a hurried pace towards the opposite side of the room.

Puzzled, and annoyed that he left so soon, she called out to him. "And where do you think you're going?"

Not breaking stride, he called over his shoulder," I left Felix and Duv'oi a surprise!"

The pneumatic hiss of the door closing was followed by the angrier, rushed hiss of the main door opening, with two haggard and visibly livid men in soot covered armor storming in.

Panting, gasping, and reeking of fury, the two men glanced up with rage at the occupants of the roomâ€¦

â€¦who had all turned and pointed as one towards the side door leading towards the armory, the hydraulics still whirring as the door aligned itself from its previous use.

The sliding door slammed (for lack of a better term) open as the two

soldiers barged on through with murder in their step.

Following the door shutting, and staying shut, the collective audience of the room took a grand total of five seconds to return to normal, give or take. Raising an eyebrow, Milia spun on a heel and began making her way towards a grav-lift, intent on reaching the main communications hub to contact the rest of the Alliance Intelligence.

'Assets huh? Let's have a look then.'

* * *

><p>New Vars City

Southern-most continent of Themeros

2BBY Galactic Standard Calendar

The constant staccato of gunfire and the thuds of explosions continued at the tempo set by the combatants. The barks of the terrifying slug throwers joining in with the whine of blaster fire to create a symphony of battle, composed by tools of death and ruin.

The hiss of heat escaping several vents along the barrel of his blaster greeted Fortima's ears as he once again slid back into cover to reload, his stockpile of energy charges having been restored at the FOB he and the remains of the 13th Mechanized Fast Response had taken shelter in.

Separating from the ragged remains of the platoon had been a trivial affair, except for the fact that the private no longer had a unit to return to. The entirety of the 354th that had been deployed no longer existed, in fact, every single soldier deployed by the Starlight had died in the intense urban combat that had engulfed the industrial powerhouse known as a city.

All except for Ne'so, which gave him a bit of a problem, until "Rex" decided to help him out.

Now rearmed, rested and ready, Ne'so had advanced along with the 167th Advanced Reconnaissance Corps, quite a bit of a jump for a lowly infantryman but who was to say no to the likes of the commanding officer of the Battalion? Field promotions certainly weren't unheard of, the scale of the promotion may have been questionable, but considering everyone had submitted their lives to the reaper as it seemed unlikely anyone would survive, no one cared to bat an eye.

Adjusting his grip on the newer DM-18 blaster rifle, he leaned close to the edge of the jagged wall, waiting, before popping out and letting loose a flurry of bolts. The barrage impacted against the wall of the building opposite him and his new squad, dust thrown up from the impacts obscuring his designated target as the enemy infantry narrowly avoided his burst. Additional fire peppered the housing complex, the already dilapidated building falling into further ruin as superheated bolts melted away at the structure.

Several rifle reports and the telltale whizzing of missed rounds forced the Imperials back under cover as the enemy regained their bearings, one managing to place a round into the chest piece of the squad gunner a level above Ne'so, the man splattering the inside of his helmet with blood as he attempted to gasp on reflex.

With the withering fire of the repeater blaster no longer a threat, the newly dubbed "Terrans" advanced more boldly, with pairs slinking out across the street under the cover of their fellow squadmates.

Fortima's transponder crackled, before he heard the voice of his squad leader, Sgt. Ramas, and his order across the frequency. "We need another man to take up that squad gun! We won't stand a chance up close! Double time it!"

Taking this as his cue to act, Fortima signaled to his partner on the other side of the wall, receiving a brief nod, before he slung his rifle across his back and bolted to the stairway. Taking it three steps at a time, leaping up, he came up onto the remains of the burned out third floor, picking his way through rubble and debris to assess the condition of the heavy weapon handler and his equipment.

Coming upon the man and his unmoving, blood-soaked form, Ne'so let loose a light curse before shoving the body aside, and shouldering the heavy rifle. Checking the coolant levels as well as the charge of the power pack, Ne'so quickly frisked the dead gunner, claiming and slamming a fresh charge into the slot before turning the dual-barreled front of the gun on the street below. Lining up his sights on the second line relative to his position, Ne'so called out his targets, then proceeded to unleash hell upon the poor men.

The Mk. III S-Web medium repeating blaster was based off the tried and true design of the EWHB-12, with prototypes introduced in the waning days of the Clone Wars, however, several "manufacturing issues" and "design mechanics" pushed the development of the new heavy blaster back. The barrel sported two openings side by side, with the rifle capable of two distinctly different firing modes. The first setting charged heavy energy capacitors within the rifle, allowing large amounts of energy to coalesce within the firing chambers of both barrels. These heavy bolts would then fly out at a rate of over one-hundred fifty bolts per minute, favoring heavy damage per shot.

The current firing mode however, utilized several smaller, micro capacitors to charge multiple bolts of energy at the same time, with oscillating focus crystals to rapidly direct the smaller, faster bolts out of each barrel, alternating between the two to prevent overheating and decrease the gap between shots.

Spitting super-heated death at over 2200 rounds per minute, Ne'so raked the advancing forces, thoroughly dousing the hostiles and the street with energy bolts. The men on the street simply ceased existing, with no suppressing fire on the emplaced gun, Ne'so was allowed to target without discretion, only using a few bolts to down their shields and _everything else_ to eviscerate, and, annihilate, and eradicate them. Accompanying the popping of energy shields came the muted cries and screams of the men as their armor burned and boiled, burns and scorched giving way to melting metal as blaster

bolts bored into their extremely resilient armor.

Sensing the opening, the rest of the Imperials opened fire as well, picking off the front two Terrans then assisting in mopping up the complex. Sending two scouts, the Imperials signaled the all clear and began reassembling across the avenue at another intersection. Having disassembled the gun and bringing his dog tags, Ne'so presented the items to Ramas, who collected the tags, but told him to keep the gun. "The squad needs a heavy; bring the fire Smokes. Everyone else, we've still got enemies in the area, stay sharp, blasters up, you don't want to end up like the rest. Bravo up!"

Moving on, Ne'so was slightly perturbed at the name, before shrugging and falling in step, slinking with the rest of his squad across the streets in hopes of clearing the Terran menace from their world.

What false hope.

* * *

><p>"Sir, Bravo has managed to push their way through sectors 5 and 7, they're moving along a lateral path towards the Zyne River, they should manage to rendezvous with Captain Lorgan before nightfall."<p>

Sparing a moment to glance at the holodisplay, Rex simply nodded before retuning his attention towards the men in front of him, three troopers donning the ruby red armor of the 167th 's long-ranged artillery and two wearing the bleached white of the Imperial infantry. Only the infantry had removed their helmets.

"With all due respect sir, our men are dying in droves, we need more support along our eastern flank else we'll be cut up like banthas on the plains!"

Barely suppressing the urge to bang his head on a wall, Rex steeled himself, "And as I've said before, your side can take a beating yet, we need our guns trained on the eastern bank of the Zyne, should that front fall ,the enemy will have a straight line right into our supply lines. We're running a war here, not a charity soldier, not everyone can get everything."

The trooper growled before straightening a bit, "Bah, you're making a mistake, more men will die if we don't get our support and you know it."

"Sacrifice the few to save the many, you have the most defensible position, plus your men are dug in, they'll have a harder time pushing your front, now go, my attention is needed elsewhere."

Put off, the two troopers saluted before turning to exit, but the man had to get one last jab in. Smirking and turning he commented, "Of course you'd be willing to cast aside your men, that's what you were bred for wasn't it? _Clone_."

Walking out and shutting the door, the two troopers missed the large bang that reverberated around the CIC of the command structure.

Gloves creaking from the strain of his fists, Rex forced himself to breathe as he extracted his hand from the console in front of him, the sizeable dent in the metal tantamount to the brief flash of anger he had just let loose.

The men in the room gave the captain a wide berth, knowing full well how the man felt; they were bristling with irritation as well. Hardened eyes focused on nothing behind the polarized visor as the veteran seethed, before a hand on his shoulder shook him from his reverie.

Looking up, he found himself staring at the visor of another trooper, the slits of the helmet depolarized to show the face behind the mask. Two eyes stared at him, one of strong dark brown, the other of sterling silver; organic and bionic, the gifts given by the hand of several platoons worth of commando droids, the final cruel memento of a time long past, ghosts and whispers made manifest.

"Let it go brother."

Turning back to the screen, Rex squeezed the side of the panel, before the tension in his arms dissipated, his arms going lax as his posture returned to its usual stoic position.

Reaching up, he twisted his helmet, disengaging the environmental seals and safeties of the protective headpiece before setting it aside.

Hardened eyes gazed straight ahead at the occupants of the room, his oldest companions, bonded through their very genetic code, the men of the 167th Advanced Reconnaissance Corps stood at the ready.

His men, his _brothers_.

"Let's get back on task people."

* * *

><p>Aaaaaaaaand wrap! Okay, so, no sense in sugar coating it: my update schedule sucks. Unfortunately, there's nothing I can truly do to fix that problem, except of course dropping out of school and forgoing my plans for the futureâ€|

â€|**Yeah not happening :P**

**So, read review, tell me what you guys think, and theres something I need to ask of you people: I need characters.**

**Send me names, occupations, backgrounds, preferences; I'll take anything and everything (hopefully, probably not ****everything**_** but you know) and I'll make an effort to integrate this into my story. **_

**Well, that's it for now, cya on the flipside. **

End
file.